

SOME HOPE AND SOME DESPAIR

NUMBER 1 - SOMETIME IN '96 - \$2.00

AVOCADO BABY
BIKINI KILL
KICKING GIANT
MILKY WIMPSHAKES
NAILS OF HAWAIIAN
NO EMPATHY
PHANTOM PREGNANCIES
RED AUNT'S
REFRIGERATOR
SUPERCHUNK
VOMIT LAUNCH

Plus...

BECK TOUR DIARY (Part 1)

SLAMPT UNDERGROUND ORGANIZATION

WELCOME TO MY HECTIC WORLD...

Okay, this is just a brief introduction to my new fanzine. I'm no good at writing monologues, so I'll keep this brief and to the point...

In 1984, I helped start a fanzine called AOK. It was all of your fanzine stuff. Nothing exciting to look back on. Bad layouts, trite interviews, pretentious columns. Still, I remember it being one of the most exciting projects I've ever been involved with. Back then, we were so excited about music and underground culture. We were bursting at the seams with desire to express ourselves even while mastering the obvious.

That is what I'm trying to recapture with this zine.

Granted, it's a self-indulgent event. I'm doing it within the strictest definition of a "fan"-zine. It's out of love for the bands and the underground world around it. As a result, while I consider myself a very political and literate person. I don't make much attempt at reflecting that in these pages. I have other outlets for that.

So here it is. In a year (if not already) what you are holding will be completely redundant. That's what fanzines are about. They're not meant to last. They live only within context.

Anyway, here goes nothing...

LANCE

PS - Sorry for excessive use of the "hating" font. Something else next time...

For ad info or any correspondence, write:
PO Box 460346 - San Francisco, CA 94146

avocado Baby

Avocado Baby are the band putting the "pop" into "populist". D.I.Y. trans-gender pop home recordings. Sorta like the Raincoats meets Jesus Couldn't Drum meets I dunno, fakey jazz Huggy Bear stuff. Lots of style and catchy tunes just playing long enough for the melody to be stuck in the back of your mind. Pop music with an agenda. This two piece is made up of Ballerina Pink and Boyheart Soup who play and sing everything into their little Tascam four track. Interview done via mail and fax machines...

1. To start off, the ultimate in mundane questions! Who are you, what do you play and how long have you been playing music together?

BALLERINA PINK - Ballerina Pink and Boyheart Soup: co-conspirators in the running of the Slampt Underground Organization: also members of the various gangs: Pussycat Trash (now deceased): Milky Wimpshake: etc. We've been playing music together since I bought a bass guitar so since 1990 - Avocado Baby officially started with "A Million And Nine Cassette" Autumn 1992 - The same time as Slampt began. We play bass, guitar, xylophone, octavia, finger cymbals, maracas - whatever's to hand. We swap around lots.

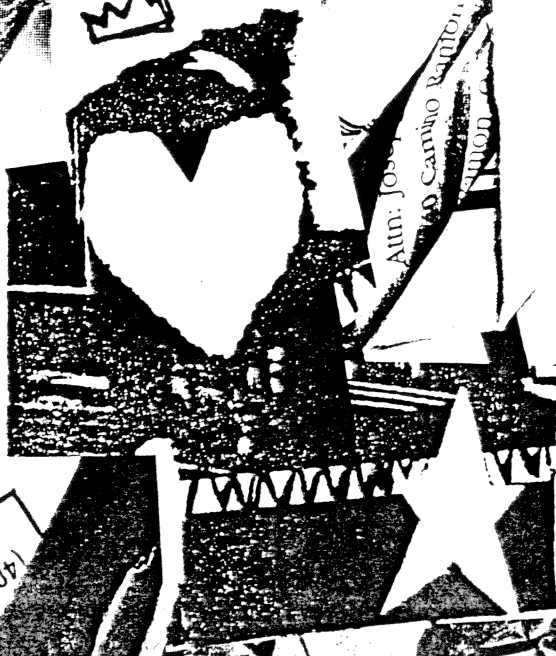
2. What is with the name? I usually think of avocados as being a mostly Californian thing. Is there some deeper meaning?

BP - Avocado Baby is a children's book where this baby is born into a family and won't eat anything except Avocados. When he eats avocados he gets superhuman strength and defends the family from various marauders. So Avocado Baby (we) are certainly defending things: Slampt: Underground: our own alien ways of existence. Also - innocence. Also - avocados are excellent sustenance, if a little expensive on this un-sunny isle. When we played France we were fed avocados lots. Yay!

3. Caffeine seems a somewhat recurring topic (well, it's in a couple of songs anyway). Are you coffee addicts like most Americans? I usually think of England as being mostly tea-positive and coffee-negative. Are you a cafe band?

BP - Boyheart Soup drinks coffee till it comes out of his ears. I recently prefer tea. When I want caffeine I tend to go for Pepsi or Coke. Coffee is gaining in popularity in the UK. Night people tend to rely on it. It makes me shake and * (sorry, I couldn't read this word - Lance). Drugs just don't work very well in my body - I go through vodka phases to stop me worrying but am not drinking at all at the moment.

4. Is "Come Clean" a true story? Are you genuinely concerned with maturity versus how old you are? Do you think it's possible to really be the one taken advantage of in a sexual situation with



Queenboy

a minor? How old are you (just curious)?

BP - Boyheart should answer this one. He wrote the lyrics: We are 23 and 24.

Boyheart Soup - "Come Clean" is about a 17 year old boy I was intrigued by. I didn't actually sleep with him - artistic license! I thought he had an "older" perspective on life than me, despite being 17, which seemed a shame. I am getting older, but I don't see why I should "get serious" or grow up or get a career or a mortgage. A younger person can undoubtedly take advantage of an older person in a sexual situation, and with homosexual liaisons it gets more complicated because the age of consent is (ridiculously) higher for homosexuals than heterosexuals, so if I had fucked that boy, I could have been arrested. The idea that you have to be older to really "know" whether you're gay or not is so unfair when the heterosexual age of consent is 16. As if no-one had every regretted having heterosexual sex when they were younger - you just want to try things out when you're 16, or I did, and to try to legislate against it is unfathomable and outrageous.

5. A lot of your songs seem to be a documenting or categorizing of your daily lives? Is that a fair assessment? Do you feel a need to expose your daily life or is it some kind of anti-pretentious move?

BP - I would say Avocado Baby are documenting our ways of living. This is perhaps partly the point of all counter cultures: to assert your own experiences and 'alien-nests'. But it isn't even as contrived as that. It is just what we write songs about.

6. Who writes most of the songs? Do you write any together? How do the songs come together?

BP - We write all of the songs together. We write all the lyrics and music together. There is no other way to do it.

7. When you record, do you usually have the songs really worked out? Or do you record them as you write them, making up the instrumentation as you go?

BP - We don't tend to know the songs very well before we record them: we write them then usually record straight away. We're very impatient.

8. What is the meaning behind "Queenboy and the Kinggirl"? Who is who?

BP - Queen Boy and the King Girl is interchangeably both of us. Like in Avocado Baby we're pretty equal and boyness and girlness doesn't really mean that much. If a boy is a queen it's pretty obvious what it means but what is a girl who is a King? I would say the sexuality of Avocado Baby is pretty ambiguous. Boyheart is willowy and thin and I'm sort of solid and often tough looking I'm told. Also, we're both "bi-

sexual" if you need to use such a dumb term.

9. Do you live in Newcastle? I've always had the impression it was a really working class industrial town... Is that true? How does a band like Avocado Baby exist in such conditions?

BP - Newcastle is our home. Most of the industry is winding down here - it used to be a big ship-building city. There is a lot of unemployment. But stuff like theater is big here. Not much of a gay scene but all that sort of stuff exists here. There's two Universities and quite a lot of student apathy. Local people tend to find the students a nuisance as they're upper-class spoiled shits who have no respect for anything, including Newcastle. Newcastle can be volatile. Football is big here. Punk notions are frowned upon by the music institutions here. We spend a lot of time defending ourselves. Neither of us are from here - we're from the South.

BS - I love Newcastle, it's a great place and I wish I'd moved here sooner instead of wasting 18 years living in a tiny village in Kent (South of England - urgh!).

and the Kinggirl

10. What is your best lyric? What is the best song Avocado Baby has got going for it?

BP - "Wanted to take my glad rags off but Thurston Moore is dead" is a lyric I always relish singing. All of our songs are necessary. I prefer the slower "sensitive" ones to the faster "poppy" ones.

BS - We've released over 60 songs now, and I like some more than others but I couldn't pick a favorite, but I like doing "Outer Space Lover" because we improvise the lyrics at the end, so it's different every time, which keeps it fresh. I think "fucking Love Song" has a good, simple - but - effective lyrics. If you can say what you want to say in a simple way, then all the better. "Sexual Deviant" off our first tape is a good example of that. We prefer not to fuck about.

11. Do you folks play live much? What are your live gigs like?

BP - We don't play live very often (although we are very cheap to hire!). We are more popular abroad it seems. We are like cabaret live.

12. Do you ever aspire to have a full band with drums and everything? Who plays the little xylophone thing?

BP - Avocado Baby would not work as a full band, it is purposefully minimal. Both Pete and I play the xylophone and it's not little. It's a big fuck off xylophone.

13. What bands do you like? Are there any outside influences on Avocado Baby? Who do you respect as far as other musicians these days?

BP - Bands I like: Godhead Silo, Huggy Bear, Fugazi, Stereolab, N.O.U., everything on Slampt. People say Avocado Baby sound like the Young Marble Giants but we've not heard them. I don't really like "musi-

cians" as much as people who've done stuff in an uncompromising punk way: Amelia Fletcher, Ian MacKaye, etc. I hate that Kent McClard bloke though, he is totally DUMB. Like, I love unlimited people and bands that grow and develop.

BS - I'm influenced by Daniel Johnston a lot, I also admire all those bands Rachel mentioned and also Jonathan Richman, Arthur Conley, Minor Threat, Talulah Gosh, and the Ink Spots.

14. What else do you have out other than the Slampt 7"?

BP - Discography for Avocado Baby...

A Million And Nine - cassette - Slampt

Sex and Gum - cassette - Slampt

Queen Boy and The King Girl - 7" - Slampt

Voluptuous And Supreme - 7" - Paperplane

Compilations we've been on...

Schism Fix - cassette - Plankton - "Ugly Celebration"

Skinless Wonder - cassette - Slampt - "Parachute

Drop", "Carpet Stain Remover", "Groovy Shoes"

Elastic Jet Mission - LP - Slampt - "Cinema Date"

Comic Shop - cassette - Paper Plane - "Angel Queen Party"

Bedroom Palace - cassette - Lo Fi - "Clumsy Punk Dance Beat"

15. Any last comments?

BP - This is not a good question to ask in an interview - it is too vague and lazy. Although I must commend you on your other questions, much more interesting than the other interviews we tend to do.



Write to the wonderful Avocado Baby...

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MY BECK TOUR DIARY...

PART ONE OF A
SOMEWHAT INTERESTING
SERIES...

Okay, let's start this off by saying that I really have no idea how this all happened. I have no idea how it came to pass that I auditioned for Beck. I have no idea why they thought I was worth flying to Los Angeles for an audition. I certainly have no idea how I actually got the job... But this is roughly how it went:

Beck plays in San Francisco and it turns out I know his bassist, Dave, who shortly played guitar in Cringer and produced our second single. Backstage at the SF show it turns out I know Beck as well. It seems we met years previous while Cringer was touring Germany and he was there hanging out with his grandfather. The only two things I remember about that night were that A) our gig sucked and there was nobody there and B) I stayed up all night talking with Beck and he gave me a tape of some songs he had written called "The Banjo Man".

So after a little chit chat it turns out that they're about to kick out their guitar player for reasons obvious to anyone who saw them on that tour. Two or three days later I get a call from Gold Mountain Management and I'm being flown to LA for an audition. Figuring I would just get a free trip to LA and back I didn't bring anything with me. I don't know how it happened but I ended up getting the job and that left me stranded in LA with no money and no change of clothes.

I won't bore you with the details of how those problems were sorted (including a conjugal visit from my girlfriend at the time). But let's just say that when you've got a platinum record, the advances are generous. Amazingly, in two days I went from punk rock kid to rock star dick.

I guess I should also mention that the guitar player I replaced went on to disgusting success with his god awful shitty band The Presidents Of The United States... How pathetic...

But let's back this up just a second. On the last week of July I flew down to Los Angeles for my audition. I already learned a few of the songs just to show I made some effort. We played for about an hour or so and got a few songs down. I played like shit and was nervous as fuck so I thought I'd be going home the next day. The next evening I get the call telling me that I was in the band. There was just one problem: WE HAD TO PLAY A GIG THE NEXT NIGHT! The next morning we run over to the practice space and work on songs for an hour before soundcheck. Whatever songs I didn't know, Dave roughly explained them to me backstage. I was scared shitless that night.

Turned out the gig kinda sucked anyway. How good could it have been with Crazy Horse (sans Neil Young) and the Smithereens opening? My set list on

stage was literally a note book of my notes and scrawled tableture. Surpassingly, I made it through the set and began to understand the pace I would be living at for the next few months.

At this point in time I only knew about nine songs (three of which I had only played once at the gig). We have a week before we had to leave and

Beck was mostly busy getting the samples and shit together. So over about six practices that were roughly two hours a piece, I learned some thirty songs. I guess there's a reason why rock stars get the big money. Next thing I knew I was on a nightmare of a flight to Australia...

AUG 3 We arrive in Sydney. Everybody is doubling up in rooms and I'm sharing a room with Gloria the sound person. I never really knew what her trip was. She had a husband (or something like that) and a kid back home. I get the impression she came from a lot of money as her and her husband's parents chipped and bought her... a house! They pooled their money and bought a fucking house! It's such another world these people live in.

Dave, the aforementioned bassist, shared a room with Joey who drummed. To make that world even smaller, Joey went to school with Adam from Jawbreaker and our old drummer, Brendan. Before Beck he had been touring around and recording with Walt Mink who were on Caroline or something like that...

Ben Cooley was the Tour Manager. His only previous experience was with Walt Mink but I wouldn't have been able to tell the difference anyway. He shared a room with the tech/roadie Kenny. Kenny is about a year younger than me and the quintessential rocker guy. I don't mean that like some poodle haired GIT poser. Kenny was thin as a pole, had black stringy hair and perfectly understood the meaning of Cheap Trick, Queen AND Nirvana. It's hard to explain, but I understood.

AUG 4 This was our day off in Sydney. Well, we went all over the place seeing the sights and I'd be lying if I said I remembered any of them. Got to meet Pav who organized the tour. The world kept getting smaller as we talked about mutual friends in Fugazi, Huggy Bear and Superchunk.

That night we got taken out to dinner by Chris Dunn who runs BMG down there. Turns out he used to co-run Waterfront Records and is a fan of both Cringer and J Church (which might be more of a reflection on him than it is on us). All I really remember about that night was getting shit-faced at some Indian Restaurant and then making fun of the way Australians dressed (amongst other things).

AUG 5 The Playroom, Goldcoast. This was the first real gig of the tour and it was in the middle of nowhere to a few hundred people. Kind of a warm up. Of course, by now I'd forgotten all the songs and was getting really nervous. Logic told me to start drinking. I think the show went alright. I actually think Beck was more nervous than I was. He went to the bathroom about three times right before we went on stage.

AUG 6 The Roxy, Brisbane. This was my first experience with Beck-mania. I mean, I like his songs and I knew he was popular and all... But screaming girls trying to get backstage? I had no idea he was on the verge of being a teen idol.

AUSTRALIA/NZ TOUR 1994

DATE	VENUE	CITY
WED AUG 03	ARRIVE	SYDNEY
THU AUG 04	DAY OFF	SYDNEY
FRI AUG 05	THE PLAYROOM	GOLDCOAST
SAT AUG 06	THE ROXY	BRISBANE
SUN AUG 07	DAY OFF	BYRON BAY
MON AUG 08	TRAVEL DAY	PERTH
TUE AUG 09	THE LONESTAR	PERTH
WED AUG 10	TRAVEL DAY	ADELAIDE
THU AUG 11	THE SYNAGOGUE	ADELAIDE
FRI AUG 12	PRINCE OF WALES	MELBOURNE
SAT AUG 13	PRINCE OF WALES	MELBOURNE
SUN AUG 14	DAY OFF	MELBOURNE
MON AUG 15	TRAVEL DAY	SYDNEY
TUE AUG 16	PRESS DAY	SYDNEY
WED AUG 17	ANU BAR	CANBERRA
THU AUG 18	N'CASTLE UNI	NEWCASTLE
FRI AUG 19	METRO THEATRE	SYDNEY
SAT AUG 20	METRO THEATRE	SYDNEY
SUN AUG 21	DAY OFF	SYDNEY
MON AUG 22	TRAVEL DAY	NEW ZEALAND
TUE AUG 23	TOWN HALL	AUCKLAND
WED AUG 24	TRAVEL DAY	HOME

This place was really weird. You know that song about Brisbane by the Saints? Totally true. I can't even explain how weird it was with all the security cameras everywhere. The club looked like an old disco with tacky glass stairways leading nowhere in particular. The backstage was a plush carpeted room with mood lights and shit. It was bigger than 90% of the clubs J Church play in...

AUG 7 With two gigs under my belt it was high time for a day off. Whew! I don't know why we needed a day off. That's just how they do things. We cruised around Byron Bay and ate at some hippie co-op. We hiked down to some nude beach but nobody was there and fuck if we were gonna get naked. As a change of pace here, we stayed in bungalows instead of hotel rooms... I know, I know. You just notice these kinds of things when you're on tour...

AUG 8 Had to fly across the continent for the next gig so that meant another day off. Of course we had been flying from gig to gig here. You wanna talk about how decadent a tour bus can be? How about flying from gig to gig? This rock star thing is alright.

AUG 9 The Lonestar, Perth. This show was totally rocking. The crowd was really awesome. It felt like a punk rock gig. We soundchecked doing a That Dog cover. Apparently, Foster's Lager is considered one of the worst beers down under and we found that out in Perth. Whenever they brought us nice Australian beers backstage we would hassle the club owners for Foster's. "C'mon dude, don't hold out on us. Where's the real good stuff. Where's the Foster's?" These things just seem funnier on the road...

Magic Dirt were the opening band for the whole tour. I have to admit that I thought they kind of sucked at first. But all of a sudden I got really into

them. Middle period Sonic Youth rhythms and guitar noises with a throaty girl singer. She was kind of sexy in an awkward way. She was sort of an Eight Ball character if you know what I mean.

This was my first experience with a real sleazy groupie. Before it had been crazed teens. But now it was some middle aged sleaze bag with fluffy hair and a complexion that hinted some past speed binge. She was wearing a mini-skirt and had her leg up on a chair pinning Beck in, who was basically too nice to tell her to fuck off. Apparently, she was some sort of regular groupie at this club and even tried to get Fugazi to take her back to the hotel with them. While some bands would have taken advantage of the situation, we were right on guys and had the promoter get rid of her if not just for health reasons...

AUG 10 Time for another day off to get to Adelaide. The night we got there, The Bad Brains were playing with the Meanies and we decided to check it out. Of course, it was boring as all fuck but I did hook up with my friend Greg there. We made plans to hang out the next day while Beck did an in-store at some record store.

AUG 11 The Synagogue, Adelaide. My friend Greg runs a punk mail order called Spiral Objective. He and his entourage of people came down to the gig and I didn't expect them to like the music. I'm sure they didn't but we had a great time hanging out and eating some really incredible vegetarian food. He told me some great story about a society of serial killers in Adelaide. I can't remember it but I'll try to get the story off of him for some future issue...

At this point we were joined by the Jon Spencer Blues Explosion. Their entourage included Christina from Boss Hog and Bruce from Au Go Go. So it was the polite awkwardness of meeting new people all of whom I was in total awe of... Of course it was a little weird for Beck too. He was a huge Pussy Galore fan as was I. He's got Pussy Galore samples in a few of his songs. It must be pretty strange to have your idols band opening for you.

AUG 12 Prince Of Wales, Melbourne. Melbourne was fucking totally cold and raining. Joey and I went to a thrift store. But by the time we got there I was so went I didn't feel like looking at anything. We were all staying at a hotel walking distance from the club. Before the gig, everyone was hanging out in Russell and Judah's room (the other two Blues Explosions) watching that shitty Godzilla remake from '85.

"I don't have to go out and see the sights. I'm happy just BEING in Australia", Russell.

This gig was kind of a disaster. The Blues Explosion totally kicked ass. They went off like no other band I've ever seen. I felt like I was watching Rites Of Spring or something. Crazy emo blues that



sent the alternative Beck fans running for cover.

Unfortunately, they rocked so hard that somehow water got spilled on the sampler and fucked it up. No sampler meant no hip hop. That meant no "Loser". The kids were pissed. But fuck them, you know? I always thought "Loser" was the weakest song in our set. Beck's got so many other songs that are so much more clever. I don't understand why all the fans cling to some half-hearted rap song...

AUG 13 Prince Of Wales, Melbourne. Second sold out gig and the sampler was working again. The kids got "Loser". The kids were sated. For now...

You know what? The Blues Explosion are fuckin' cool people. Believe me, there was a lot of potential for them to be a bunch of weirdoes. But they were totally cool people. Fucking Judah Bauer started talking to me about when he went to see bands at ABC-No Rio! Can you imagine that? I can't. I can't even imagine myself there.

Anyway, I think was the day we went to see the sharks at the aquarium thing they have there. Joey, Jon Spencer, Christina, Bruce and I all went and it was probably the most touristy thing we did on the whole tour. As cheesy as it was, I gotta say I was pretty impressed by the glass tunnel you walk through with sharks all around...

AUG 14 Big day off in Melbourne and it was bonding time with Bruce from Au Go Go. We got up really early in the morning and went to the biggest record swap I've ever been to in my entire life. We're talking hundreds of stalls. I spent most of my saved per diems here on old Australian punk singles and albums and stuff. I could have easily stayed there all day.

Later that day I went to Au Go Go itself and Bruce let me buy records out of the secret warehouse. Miles and miles of collectible singles both Australian and American. Old stuff I was dying for with everything from Celibate Rifles to Prisonshake limited singles to Halo Of Flies singles. There went the rest of my money. I was feeling sorry for Beck. Whenever we went out and did these little excursions, he was stuck doing hours of tedious interviews for idiotic magazines and video shows. As the tour went on, it only got worse.

AUG 15 Spent the day traveling back to Sydney. I think this was the night we all got taken out to dinner by record label schmucks. It was some totally fancy

PRESS SCHEDULE (cont)

FRIDAY 12 AUGUST - MELBOURNE

4.15pm Face to face live to air interview with Stephen Walker, Radio 3RRR Fm

SATURDAY 13 AUGUST - MELBOURNE

12.30pm Golden Sounds to collect Beck from hotel and travel to instore.
1pm Instore appearance at Gaslight Records - 45 Bowrie at Melb. contact: Geoff Harrison (03) 650 9009
2pm Depart instore

TUESDAY 16 AUGUST - SYDNEY

11pm Live to air interview and performance with Andrew Denton
Host: Andrew Denton - Late night variety programme
11am Back line to arrive
12.30 - 3.30pm Bands rehearsal
9pm Dress rehearsal
9.20pm Final run in front of audience

FRIDAY 19 AUGUST - SYDNEY

2.30pm Pre-record appearance/host segment on Rage. Beck will be required to pick 20 clips from a playlist which will be played on Rage. At Hotel.

SATURDAY 20 AUGUST - SYDNEY

1.30pm Golden Sounds to collect Beck from hotel for instore.
2pm Instore appearance at Redeye Records

SUNDAY 21 AUGUST - SYDNEY

Pre-record interview with Radio triple J
"Live at the Wireless", Contact: Phil McKeller

place that had all this crazy stuff on the menu. I'm a vegetarian. But I've got to admit I was curious to find out what kangaroo meat was like. I just imagined a meat loaf with a pouch.

AUG 16 Instead of a gig, we played on the Andrew Denton Show. I think that's what it was called. From what we were told it was the Australian equivalent to Letterman or something like that. I don't even remember what we played. The end of the show was so corny. The host was supposed to pick a song at random out of a barrel full of song names and we as the musical guest were supposed to magically play a

cover of the song. Of course it's all pre-planned with the only hitch being that we didn't know any cover. At the last minute we learned a few bars of "Hit Me With Your Best Shot" by Pat Benatar and segued it right into a noise jam thing. I kind of thought it was funny. But everyone else was in a totally bad mood afterwards for some reason...

AUG 17 Anu Bar, Canberra. Strange gig here. Two things really stood out for me. Some generic punk band opened which I thought was really weird. They should have been opening for J Church at Gilman, not Beck in Canberra.

The club didn't really have any sort of backstage so a room to the side was converted into a dressing room. Unfortunately, all the walls were glass so all the fans could look in and spy on us. It was actually kind of funny watching the promoter try to deal with it all. The girls kept trying to get our attention by tapping on the glass and holding up notes to the glass window. So the promoter taped up pieces of newspaper to the windows. Unfortunately, he didn't have enough paper to cover the windows entirely. So through the little spaces between the newspaper you could see all these little eyes peering in.

AUG 18 Newcastle University, Newcastle. Totally boring gig with just us and the Blues Explosion. I mostly remember hanging out with Christina during the Blues Explosion's set and throwing oranges at Jon Spencer during "Orange". At some point in the conversation I found out what the two of them did for a living (at the time, anyway). Can you imagine Christina working for Allure magazine and Jon Spencer working for Details? Maybe this is old news to the rest of the alternative world. But I was shocked.

AUG 19 Metro Theater, Sydney. Boring, Sydney. Boring. A lovely theater and a lovely meal before hand. But you know what? I think we were getting sick of Australia. I was starting to get really homesick and

that certainly tainted this gig. While I don't really remember much of this gig, I don't remember it being especially bad.

AUG 20 Metro Theater, Sydney. Two gigs in one day. An all ages matinee and followed by a grown-ups show followed by a big after party and I really wasn't up for it. I was really homesick, freezing cold (I hadn't packed for winter. I hadn't really packed at all.) and, for some reason, that translated into being totally horny. I don't know why. I really don't. It's just one of those unexplainable travel quotients that occurs every so often.

The first gig turned out to be totally fun. It was an early show and I had already started drinking. The Noise Addicts opened and looked like they were totally nervous. They were so sweet it was painful. They were all 15 years old and were supposed to open for us the night before but their parents wouldn't let them. Christina and Gloria watched the whole set glowing from the side like it was their kids on stage.

After they got done they all got high in their dressing room and signed autographs for their 15 year old fans. It was like an alternative Bugsy Malone or something.

Through the whole show there were just hundreds of screaming girls going crazy. You would have thought we were the Beatles or something. The crowd was just amazing. Of course, I was pretty drunk at that point as well. Whatever.

Between shows, we were given a bunch of passes for and end of tour party after the gig. We were told to go in the crowd and give them away to anyone we wanted to invite. I'm assuming they meant we were supposed to give them girls we thought were hot or something like that. After toying with the thought of giving them to a select group of homeless people outside, I decided to give my tickets to whatever fans looked the most eager to get backstage and get their t-shirts autographed.

After the gig (which I completely don't remember), I didn't feel any rush to get to the party. I stuck around with the crew and helped break down guitar stands and shit and took a cab over with Kenny and Ben. The party was fun if not just because of the open bar. It was some fancy room in some fancy hotel. People danced and flirted and I just sat down and did some focused drinking. Everyone I gave passes to felt obligated to come and chat with me for a while which was nice. By then I wasn't depressed. I was just kind of bored. I was also reaching that point of drunkenness when conversations start getting difficult to follow. My last memory of the party was Jon Spencer walking around with a huge McDonald's bag passing out burgers to anyone that wanted one. I was just drunk enough that I almost took one.

AUG 21 Another day in Sydney. I was all hung over and we had to record a radio show. We learned a couple of songs while we were there in the studio. John Silva from Beck's management was there and gave me some herbal stuff that suddenly made me feel better. I have to say, having a hang-over is almost worth just for that glorious moment when you realize that hang-over is leaving you. In the studio I

suddenly became totally energized and aggressive. I vented by sneaking off into some office in the building and making a direct call back to the states on the radio stations bill. Very satisfying.

AUG 22 Yahoo! We left Australia! Flying from Australia to New Zealand was the same great feeling I last felt crossing the border out of Germany and into Holland. Of course Australia and New Zealand were wet and cold and full of weird looking white folks so the comparisons to Germany and Holland are obvious...

Some of the folks, and I honestly don't remember who, decided to go check out some of the strip clubs in the area and I politely declined and instead hung out with the Flying Nun folks for hours. I was completely thrilled to hear all the old stories of some of my favorite bands like The Chills, Toy Love, The Clean and all the bands from the AK79 compilation record. I could have talked with these people all night and virtually did.

AUG 23 Town Hall, Auckland New Zealand. Got up early and headed over to Flying Nun and spent a couple hundred dollars on records that would have cost me twice as much back here in the states. Surprisingly, got a bunch of rarities like a 3Ds double CDEP pack and both of The Clean "Rarities" tapes.

The gig itself turned out to be a really out of control climax to the tour. We ended our set with a Pussy Galore cover and all of the Blues Explosion with Christina joined us on stage for the mayhem that turned into a long jam. The jam turned into chaos when Jon Spencer started climbing the PA columns on the side of the stage up to the balcony. The retarded security didn't realize he was part of the band and grabbed him. We all ran off stage and Dave stopped them just before they started kicking the shit out of him. Total chaos.

Spent the night saying all of our good-byes and drinking and playing pinball to the wee hours when our flight left. Puking and hung over, we made it down to the airport and crawled onto the plane that would take us to the next leg of the adventure...

TOUR PARTY

TOURING PARTY

BECK HANSEN
DAVE GOMEZ
LANCE HAHN
JOEY WARONKER
BEN COOLEY
KENNY WOODS
GLORIA ALVERAZ

PROMOTER

GOLDEN SOUNDS
STEPHEN PAVLOVIC
55 ALBION ST
SURRY HILLS NSW 2010

VOCALS/GUITAR
BASS
GUITAR
DRUMS
TOUR MANAGER
STAGE TECH
SOUND ENGINEER

BIKINI KILL

fuckiNg



This is a Tobi Vail interview. At first I thought about trying to get some sort of Bikini Kill interview, but I couldn't really think of anything to ask that hadn't been asked a million times. If I know the answers, so does half of society, y'know? Okay, so this is all Tobi Vail who's a real cool, very busy, mucho interesting person. She's in Bikini Kill and the Frumpies. She works at Kill Rock Stars. She does a tape label called Bumpidee. Here's my attempt at being engaging...

1. What were the GoGo's like? Did you get to hang out? Is Jane Weidlin really the cool one? What was the gig like? Belinda?

Tobi - For me it was totally amazing to have even been asked to play that show, because I am like the hugest GoGo's fan. I was a member of the GoGo's Official Fan Club when I was in 7th and 8th grade and I still have copies of the "Let's Have A Party" fan club newsletter!! I remember what I was doing the very days both "Talk Show" and "Vacation" were released and marking the days off on my calendar waiting to see them in concert, that was in 1982 I think, the summer between 7th and 8th grade, we're talking serious formative years. After they broke up I went to see Belinda solo and followed Jane Weidlin and Gina Shock's solo efforts and wondered what ever happened to Kathy Valentine. I was so devoted—a true fan. I mean, they were just so important to me, definitely one of the things that made it a real possibility in my mind what I could actually start a band with other girls was seeing them when I was 12 years old. My whole family went to that concert, and later that year my dad gave me my first guitar, the Fender Mustang that I still play to this day. It's funny though because when I first saw that he had got it for me I completely refused to touch it for months and didn't really try too hard to learn how to play it for a few years. I was totally intimidated even though I was being encouraged in all these ways. Looking back on it and maybe I even knew it at the time, that insecurity had a lot to do with being a girl and I really needed bands like the GoGo's—women writing their own songs and playing instruments—as encouragement. Until there was the GoGo's I hadn't really thought this was being done (it was). To this day I am still really nervous before shows and feel pretty uncomfortable playing guitar in front of people. I don't want to say that all females need support from other females to get them to play music because a lot of people

dAngeR

have and have had a million different experiences playing music as females or whatever and some of them most definitely have plenty of confidence and incentive of their own but it is really important to me that the work I do, that the bands that I'm in take a stance to try and actively get girls to start bands, if they want to, and a lot of them do. There are so many guy bands and so many girls who want to play music. I think it's really obvious to say these things at this point, but, at the price of redundancy, they still need to be said because at the present time, there are still more guys playing music than there needs to be and tons of girls who want to that aren't and a lot of this discrepancy is directly related to how growing up female in a male dominated culture means that there are certain structures intact to keep you out of certain spheres, and it is vital to counteract these forces. So anyways

figuring out that I actually could play music had a lot to do with the GoGo's (among other things to be sure) and so to me they have a lot to do with Bikini Kill. I was so excited at the prospect of getting to meet them that I really didn't think about the logistics of the show: that it cost \$20, that it was sponsored by Budweiser, that it was a Bill Graham venue, etc. It just didn't even occur to me at the time we were asked to think about it, which is pretty unprecedented for Bikini Kill, though not entirely as we are pretty disorganized. I was just thinking of it as getting a chance to meet the GoGo's. I was actually not even really that into playing, I just wanted to get in free and to try to get as many of our friends on the guest list as was possible. Which brings us to the actual show—we didn't really get much of a soundcheck and Billy's guitar was fully broken and it's really hard to tell exactly what's going on in the audience when you're on such a big stage but our friends seemed to like it. The GoGo's on the other hand were absolutely amazing live. I danced in the front row all night long with my friends and had so much fun!! They played most of all of their best songs and they even did really old ones that I had never heard except for on shitty dugs of bootlegs (those songs are now available on their CD that came out last year) and they entertained the crowd with a new wave dance contest and zany stage antics! Backstage things were a little awkward at first. Everybody seemed really nervous and freaked out until the show was over except for Kathy Valentine. She was always one of my favorites and so when she introduced herself to us I forced myself to overcome my shyness so as not to miss the opportunity to declare my undying devotion to her band, I started babbling like an idiot. Then I noticed that everyone else in the room was in awe of her companion who I hadn't noticed was Darlene from Roseane, Sara Gilbert. The night proceeded from there. Eventually I was introduced to Gina and Jane, but I didn't actually talk to Belinda. Charlotte wasn't there because I guess she was nine months pregnant at the time. Jane hung out with all of our "backstage guests" and played dice with them!! While this was going on me and my sister were talking to Gina Shock and I got to tell her that I taught myself to play drums listening to her on my headphones in my parents living room and playing along!! To me, if I had to pick, Gina is and always will be "the cool one". She just had a memorable way to her, it was kind of like when I met Heather Dunn (Tiger Trap, The Lois, The Raincoats): total charm. And Gina has a really cool Baltimore accent. Most of our friends who were there would prob-

ably tell you that Jane was the cool one though. She did have green hair. It's really hard to decide. A lot of hardcore GoGo's fans are biased against Kathy Valentine because they see her as replacing Margo, one of the original members but I don't really know that story too well (by the way if any of you have extra copy of the GoGo's clippings fanzine or any bootlegs please let me know). All I know is that Kathy still looks amazing. They all do. It was definitely a night to remember with total relevance and meaning for me. For the record we didn't make any money playing that show, that's not why we did it. We played because there are just certain bands that formed you, that instilled you with possibility that changed

BIKINI

your life or whatever and for me one of those bands is the GoGo's. I used to feel similarly about the Ramones but my burning desire to meet Joey miraculously ceased a few years back. I would die to meet Joe Strummer to this day though, but that's a whole 'nother story.

In closing let me just say that the GoGo's are an amazing band who were completely ahead of their time and who wrote really great songs who know how to work a crowd and who totally fucking rock. It is high time that they start getting some of the respect that they deserve which is exactly what was happening that night. It is my hope that dummies will no longer once and for all stop using that dumb line "they rock, they're not wimpy and girly like the GoGo's were" (who must've just sucked, right) to describe every other girl band and start realizing how sexist and fucked up it is to perpetuate the idea that there are kinds of girl bands (just like there are two kinds of girls, right, whores and virgins). This is obviously gross and fucked up and unnecessary at this point in time. The GoGo's put up with enough of that shit when they were first together (as did and do every other woman rocker/girl in a band) and now seems like as good of a time as any for this to stop.

2. What are some of the craziest tour stores you've got? Weren't you really sick on the last tour?

Tobi - Yeah, so sick that I was likely to have died. We had to cancel some shows and they actually ended up playing some shows without me, which I guess ended up being kind of fucked up, like somebody tried to fight us (them) after the show and Kathleen had to be hid in the back room by the promoter and then they had to be escorted to the van by security guys with guns or something, that was in LA as the Los Palmas Theater off of Hollywood Blvd. with FYP and

Spitboy- there is a crazy tour story about that night but I don't really know it because I wasn't there. They had to play with three different drummers and I guess things got kind of out of control. Billy has a piece of chain from that night that was thrown at his head but he must've ducked like HR ducks that flying bottle in the Bad Brains movie, alright so I wasn't there so I can only resort to analogy here... There are a few other fucked up tour stories, fights and stuff like that, people being lame to us and particularly to Kathieen and trying to start fights with us and our friends pretty regularly.... I guess this might make for a good show every now and then but it sucks for me because I HATE DANGER. Sometimes I think these things detract from the show actually because we always have to be really aware of what's happening in the audience and sometimes we might just want to rock out and I usually do anyways I don't really notice when fights break out until half of my band is in the crowd. A lot of cool stuff has happened too. Tour is like an education. My favorite part is getting to see things I've read about or getting to experience things first hand that have always been referred to... and meeting people. Meeting people in bands you like is always really interesting. This year on my 25th birthday I met Mike Watt at our ABCNO RIO show. That was cool. One time I think the guitar player from the Big Boys came to one of our shows, in Texas, I didn't meet him though. Travelling with Billy is always really great

3. With all the travelling you've done, is it difficult to go back to Olympia? Small town claustrophobia?

Tobi - Travelling makes living here a lot easier for me, actually, because I'm socially awkward anyways and it seems more justified to never want to leave your apartment if you tour every so often. I was going to make a fanzine one time based on my introspective apartment lifestyle as a sort of anti-thesis to the Aaron Cometbus travel diary thing. I still might at some point because I think it would make for just as good of reading. For the past couple of years it's been really extreme, either I'm on tour and surrounded by people, the few I know really well in the van and then a million strangers every night, or else I'm in Olympia with everyone I recognize but hardly every talk to except for the same ones who are in the van — and then there's usually a few others who don't fall into either category. But both of these realities are really claustrophobic in their own ways so you have to be doing both things or you'd lose your mind which can easily happen if the duration of either time period goes on for too long. Having grown up in Olympia, I do have a really high tolerance for the drawbacks of living in a small town, but the thing is, it's not just Olympia at this point, things are getting really incestuous and gross in that regard on a larger level what with entire scenes intermingling constantly in every possible combination, and it really is starting to get to me in fact it makes me physically ill to think

NIKILL

because he is really well read and just perceptive in general and he knows all the reference points. This last tour we had a lot of fun in Memphis. We went to the vacant lot that used to be Stax/Volt. Tour is usually pretty difficult and stressful for me in general though because there are so many strangers involved and I'm pretty antisocial and am not comfortable around people I don't know very well too often, but then these crazy unexpected amazing things will happen and when you think about it later it seems really unreal. Also the sheer combination of travelling which is rad in and of itself with playing the songs you wrote in the band that your in night after night — well it's just really satisfying in that you know exactly why everything is as it is, it's a really simple reality with really specific limitations and functions. Somebody should really just make a whole fanzine just about TOUR. Donna Dresch used to always talk about doing that and I think it's still a really good idea. Somebody probably has done it but I never saw it. I recently saw a book with that idea but a fanzine would be really thorough and ongoing could have endless potential.

of certain social scenarios related to such matters. It's gotten to the point that I will be really aggressive at making any kind of contact with people in other scenes who I am pretty sure don't know everybody else I know just to try and get a grip and this has been both disastrous and entertaining. Usually it's through the mail but I have to pick really unlikely candidates because if I'm not careful they'll suddenly start meeting everyone in my life. I know this sounds totally neurotic and calculating but desperate measures are required I mean everybody I know knows everybody else I know and I'm talking everybody — the details would only make you cry. I get really sick of the sameness level and start to feel especially crazy watching aesthetics amalgamate into other configurations

fucking

without acknowledgement of origin or even sequence. It gives you such a loss of perception that you start to feel omniscient and see yourself as a character in a story with a beginning a middle and an end—it's really kind of scary. But yeah it is perceptive in some senses to mention that small town reality gets affected when you travel because the isolation factor here is really severe. Olympia is a way more warped and fucked up place than any cliché of it that exists could possibly tell you and it's getting more weird every day as more and more people move here with preconceived ideas about it and then they start hanging out and then those ideas seem to get integrated into everything until they are a part of the landscape. I'd never tell anyone to move here even though I honestly do like it but, yes, travelling is essential to sanity, as is contact of any sort with outsiders, if you will. There really is nothing to do here. Literally nothing.

4 & 5- Do you still consider yourself a message band. Do you feel your politics are diluted by the number of message oriented bands? As far as what still exists in underground music who do you respect in terms of attitude and activity?

Tobi - Well, I don't really consider us a message band, I've never been too sure what that means. I don't think we're singular enough to agree on a message or that we value consistency enough to exist in that dimension. We probably couldn't even all agree on a message if we had to, not to mention a series of messages, or the process required to convey them/it coherently—maybe these are some of the reasons there seems to be so much confusion surrounding our band. I don't think confusion is necessarily bad, it's realistic but it can also get frustrating. There always have been certain things we have talked about or tried to illustrate via our band but I wouldn't refer to them as messages really. I don't know. As for the proliferation of message oriented bands I have to honestly say I don't know who you'd be referring to or why their existence would dilute our politics. I don't really feel like we are in a scene with a bunch of bands based on our politics or anything like that, I see it as being more regional. I don't feel any sort of political ties to anybody really except for maybe some of the queer bands like Team Dresch, we're related to them but I would be hard pressed to explain all the reasons why and what they mean. I aspire to what they've done in bringing self defense to the forefront of their show and so into punk rock conversation if you will. The Free To Fight record is absolutely amazing.* We have total respect for them. As for bands we admire or aspire to besides them—we're all involved in different things and probably would all have completely different ideas about that. Today I can honestly say the two records I most like listening to (besides the really obvious stuff like X and Otis Redding) are the latest releases by Free Kitten and FYP.

* - Free To Fight is an interactive self defense record available from Candy Ass PO Box 42382, Portland, OR 97242

6. Do you ever get sick of playing "Rebel Girl"?

Tobi - No, I never do, personally speaking. It's a really great drumming song and I made up a drum part that I would want to play a lot cuz I've always loved the song. I don't really get

sick of our songs, I actually love our band musically, I love playing our songs. "Rebel Girl" is such the obvious anthem, it does seem like it would get cheesy fast but I honestly still get chills when we play it live, and it seems to mean a lot to a lot of young girls and ladies which is really cool.

7. Everyone's signing. I'm not saying it's good or bad. What's your take?

Tobi - It's been incredibly depressing to me personally and really destructive for a lot of things, people and scenes that I care about. It is really complicated, it has changed and affected everything and will continue to. I have a problem judging everybody with a universal yardstick so I don't want to generalize about it ethically but I think the effect it's had fucking sucks. To paraphrase something I read on the Fakes record, if we don't create economically viable scenes then we've constructed an environment where only the people who can afford to exist in that realm are included—and that's really limiting if you think about it.

8. What ever happened to the Frumpies? Any unreleased stuff?

Tobi - Well, we toured with Huggy Bear and that was it for a while, mostly because we started doing Bikini Kill stuff full time again and Molly's in the Peechees. There is a new single out on Lookout called "Tommy Slich". Michelle, one of our guitar players just moved to D.C. and is playing with the Cupid Car Club guys in a band called Make Up. The Frumpies played a show last month and have a bunch of unrecorded material, it's all just a matter of scheduling at this point.

9. Word association:

CAT - dog
INFO - service
ECHO - bunny
RHYTHM - pig
MORRISSEY - Kathi Wilcox
FALL - The Fall

SONIC - The Sonics lost and they are out of the playoffs and I am sad about this.

10. When will there be new Bikini Kill stuff?

Tobi - I don't really know, we are recording next weekend and have a lot of songs, hopefully by next fall.

11. What's gonna be on your tape label? What made you call it Bumpidee?

Tobi - Worst Case Scenario, The Corrections, The Bonnot Gang. All tapes are available for \$4.00 postage paid (checks payable to me and not to Bumpidee) and they each come with a newsletter that contextualizes each release. Bumpidee is a weird childhood memory that haunts me the details and relevance of which will be explained out in the Bumpidee Times. Hint: it has to do with accepting limitations, talking in codes, the thing of being irrevocably bonded to other individuals for arbitrary reasons, regionally specific cultural phenomena and wanting to be a librarian....WRITE: B. c/o Tob Vail, PO Box 2572, Olympia, WA 98507.

I've really loved Kicking Giant for a long time. Made up of a simple core of guitar drums and vocals, the two key members are more of a symbiotic entity rather than a musical duo. Like a more organic Mission Of Burma meets a more ferocious Slint, it's no easy feat creating any summation of Kicking Giant's musical "style". Musically diverse while staying true to a vision, this interview was done by guitarist, songwriter, singer Tae Won Yu...

1. First off, what is your goal in terms of lay out? The Kicking Giant CD cover in particular seems one part post-modern, one part Blue Note and one part Peter Greenaway. Is there any truth to that assessment?

Kicking Giant - In my designs what I like to

do is to take letter forms from magazines, which are already in place to spell out: function or whatever and take it out of context, to create a field or a landscape where the first level of communication is texture and meaning is a distant second. It's almost like the ransom note technique that Jamie Reid used for the Sex Pistols but I'm more concerned with the overall texture than what it's pretending to look like, the letters are what they are but the method of reading it are up to you. And I also like the way they look because they suggest background noise, if you were to "read" what static or an urban hum might sound like, I think it might look like one of my designs.

Another level is that as an immigrant, English is not my language so it reflects the sometimes disorienting slate of communicating with unfamiliar tools, like

a refined state of the halting stuttery English I spoke I spoke when I first came to this country (1975).

As for Peter Greenaway, he's much too academic and European for comparison. There's no Golden Mean that I'm after, I'm much more interested in the true innovations of this century, which is to un-define material.

2. Your music in some ways matches the layouts, order, secretly within the cacophony. What goals do you aim for when working on songs? Are there certain things you try to achieve before the lyrics are added?

KG - When I'm working on a song the most important thing for me is to find the natural groove, something that's so right in the context of the song. I believe music is a life



source and we need to connect with a much larger sense of music. For me, I can put on some Jajonka music from Morocco, and some Meters from New Orleans, and then some Phil Spector singles and they all communicate to each other and I want to play a Kicking Giant song and have it be a link in that chain as well.

3. Guitar textures are a big part of what makes Kicking Giant interesting. With all the stuff you've put out you've successfully managed to avoid much repetition like many other similar bands do (i.e.- Mecca Normal for example). What keeps you inspired musically?

KG - Well I always practice trying to discover something new, I take it seriously as a musician, but in the back of my mind I know the guitar as we know it is a dead

instrument as far as pure notes are concerned, so I'm always trying to get the groove of a Kinks riff to sound like it was created by the Bomb Squad.

4. What is the meaning behind the main track and album title, "Alien I.D."?

KG - "Alien I.D." refers to the green card or "Alien Registration" card issued to all legalized immigration in this country but my Alien I.D. is about coming to terms with my own identity which means breaking away partly from the traditional Korean world of my parents as well as the homogenous white culture of my friends. And as a musician I'm looking to give rather than play other people's licks, so there's Alien I.D. in terms of sound (representing: individuality) and this is the time where a lot of young Asian

Americans are coming up to make up our own culture here so I wanted the album to be like the first card in the deck, to propose that there's a major issue at hand and invite others to build it up and destroy it.

5. How did your first CD come to be? What happened with that label?

KG - Our first CD "Halo" being an anagram of previously released songs (cassette only) plus extra songs from the archives and our first year in Olympia. 1992, Spartadisc was a short lived NY company who put out one of the worst CD's ever made by a band called "Down And Away", I mean instant coasters. And an OK single by Ruby Falls, and the "Halo" CD. The record business proved to be too brain numbingly annoying and stupid to the man in charge so he quit.

6. Didn't you folks start in New York? What made you move to a sleepy town

KG - We started in NY in 1990 and we were doing OK but we were pretty isolated, it's a dangerous predicament in places like NY. There's so much at your disposal you don't look beyond the garbage heap to see who the rest of the world lives, which brings us to Oluympia. We made a trip out there in 1991 to play at the IPU convention and we played to kids who were dancing and it felt for the first time that music meant something to a community. I had grown up in NY since 1975 (we immigrated then) so I was ready to leave anyway, but I can say that playing and working in Oluympia saved our music or at least the change did.

KG - I pack the van. Rachel goes to the bathroom. We both seethe. But after a good dump we're pretty chipper. We also treat ourselves, on our last tour we ate out and took a night off at a Hot Springs resort in Montana.

KG - They're our inspiration. On our last tour we traveled with Sue P. Fox and Nikki McClure, they performed every night with us. Having them along definitely added a kick both for us and the audience. Sue Fox and Nikki and doing it up they're own way just like us so I thought we made a good package. Plus the audience were suprisingly

9. As an Asian American, how do you feel about the limited visibility of Asian-Americans in the music scene? Do you feel like our situation is improving? Does anything ever change or are we just out of our field?

KG - Asian-American visibility is important if only to provide a landmark for other Asians to get up and do their thing, I think this will happen naturally as more Asians wake up and get off the yoke. I think our S.F. show at Epicenter in February 95 was a great example where we could meet and check out people's work beyond this rarefied music field. It was a group show of Asian American artists, with writer's, theater

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But visibility for it's own sake, I don't think is very important. I don't think an Asian playing in a band, half-assed is worth shit and being visible to the white majority means absolutely nothing.

a witness to our efforts, because I think we're working for the uplift of our people.

10. How do you feel about exclusive activities to asian-americans? Some people accuse asian-american only activities of being ultimately separatist and reversely prejudiced. How do you feel?

KG - I think separations and prejudice is alright if you acknowledge that it exists. I can tell you I feel much more comfortable around other Asians than I do with whites but we all gotta live together so we have to listen to everybody. But if we're to make

that's right for us we don't necessarily have to include every white college liberal who think they "understand" "necessity" for "diversity". When you're down home with your people eating your food and talking and laughing that communication is deep and that's not separatist, it's natural.

11. Any last comments?

KG - Watch for new KG track on Ear Of The Dragon CD with a poster designed by Mr. Yu.

MILKY WIMPSHAKE

The Teenage

The Milky Wimpshakes are another Slampt band helping maintain the illusion that there's a huge indie pop scene in that rainy part of the world. When the drama of alienation ends and the ecstasy of communication begins... Northern England in the post-punk '90s must be some sort of breeding ground for D.I.Y. indie pop revolutionary activity. Pete played guitar and sang, Christine played bass and Joey (who's a girl) drummed...

1. Okay, are you dissing on the Wimpy Milkshakes or are you in tribute to them?

Pete - I haven't actually had a Wimpy Milkshake in years, because I don't eat meat and I don't rate "spicy beanburgers". I guess the name is just a weak punk. We are wimps, and we don't care. We'll fight for what we believe in, but not with our fists. We also have milky skin because we're ill or something. And we shake when we dance. So we're Milky Wimpshake.

2. Pop has made a turn into carefree intellectualism. Very healthy to many and you folks would seem to be a part of this "feeling". Do you feel an antagonism to historical pop that was mostly simple love songs? Do you feel like you need to make a special effort to write songs with untraditional lyrics?

P - I like love songs! I love Otis Redding! But I always feel clumsy when I try to write them, so I tend to end up singing about John Travolta or something. I don't make an effort to write untraditional lyrics, but I'm glad if they seem untraditional. I guess listening to Jonathan Richman made me realize that you can sing with passion about chewing gum wrappers, baseball players or driving a car. His lyrical variety directly inspired our song "Spidey" because I just thought "Hey, I can write a song about this childhood hero I had, why not?" So anyway, I just write lyrics about whatever I want to.

3. How many times have you seen "Saturday Night Fever"? Do you feel John Travolta tarnished his image with "Pulp Fiction"? Do you like KC & The Sunshine Band? The Commodores? Where do you draw the line between soul and disco? Is there any bad disco?

P - Joey says she's never seen "Saturday Night Fever"!

Joey - But I have friends who are deeply in love with John Travolta. I am uncultured.

P - It's not true. Well anyhow, I thought John Travolta was great in "Pulp Fiction" and also Brian De Palma's "Blow Out", he's actually a good actor as well as having a cute, coy smile. I don't profess to be knowledgeable about disco, and there is certainly such a thing as bad disco music. I don't "draw a line" on it, other than as the stuff I like and the stuff I don't, but I guess

I'm probably more inclined towards soul type stuff like Curtis Mayfield, although Ami Stewarts version of "Knock On Wood" rules. Then again, so does the original Eddie Floyd version. I just like what I like! The story of "Roll A Disco" is true: I just bought a disco LP for 1 pound and decided to write a song about how much I loved it.

4. What do you think of the huge pop punk bands like Green Day? Do you feel there is any relevance to what they're doing? Take away the distortion and the fancy production and you could virtually have a Sarah band...

J - I really don't like Green Day and I don't like commercial bands who are considered as "punk" because surely "punk" is more a state of mind rather than a sound. They are completely irrelevant to "punk".

P - I actually only know one song by Green Day, which is the one they play on the radio - it's okay, but everyone I know hates it, but as a song I don't mind it. But "punk" on a major label sounds like a contradiction in terms to me. Whatever. I don't spend a lot of time thinking about Green Day. I prefer the Ink Spots or the Peechees.

5. Speaking of which, what do you think of a lot of the bigger UK pop bands like Heavenly and that sort of thing? Do you feel at all connected to them? Do you feel like you serve a role in the history of British indie pop?

J - Heavenly are lovely! It's wonderful that the music press don't approve of them because everyone knows the music press only likes commercial stuff. Pete is more "connected" to them than myself. Every British indie pop band serves a role in the history of British indie pop.

MILKY WIMPSHAKE

P - Yay, Heavenly! We have played gigs with them, which is always fun. I don't think of Milky Wimpshake as an "indie pop band" though - we are independent, and we are pop, and we are a band, yes. But we don't want to be the Pastels. Having said that, I used to adore the Pastels when I was younger, so maybe they're an unconscious influence, but that whole scene is dead and gone now, and we don't want to be dead.

6. How concerned are you with the indie scene? Not so much the gossip, but could you ever imagine aspirations of major label? What niche do you fall into in terms of indie pop?

J - Not at all. You may find it odd that I'm more into ambient stuff (Paul Schütze, Jim O'Rourke, Thomas Köner, Labradford, Seepeel, etc.) which I personally see as being more "punk" than a lot of stuff which would be classified as such, because a great deal of ambient music is made by people with no musical expertise, is quite "offensive" to a lot of people and is

put out by pretty obscure labels. What is the point of wanting to be on a major label when Slampt exists? I find making huge amounts of money out of teenagers quite offensive.

P - I hate the word "indie". We are an independent band. We're not looking for a niche, and I don't think we've got much in common with most of our UK contemporaries other than other Slampt stuff and one or two other things in Britain. I guess I feel vaguely akin to some American bands like Unrest, Bratmobile, Butterglory...

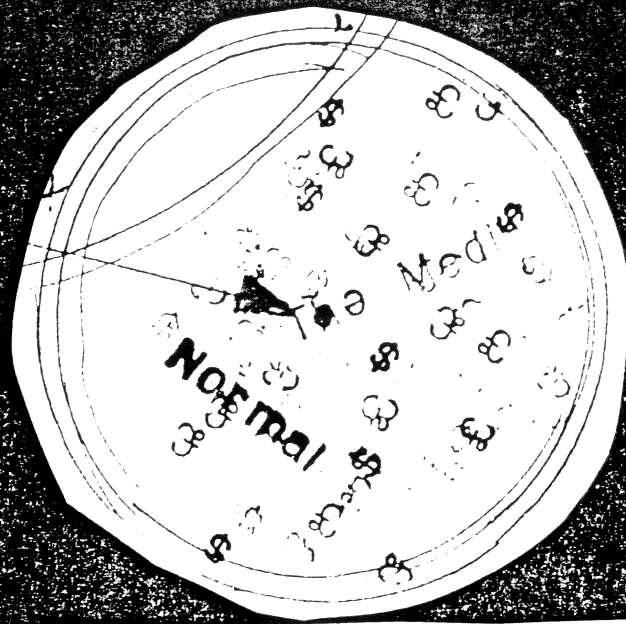
J - Yes!

P - ...and things like that. Fuck major labels, we are control freaks and I don't believe you can have total control on a major label, and we're not bothered about making a lot of money, although we would like lots of people to hear our music, but we're arrogant enough to believe we can do it on our own terms without men in suits guiding our "career".

7. When Men Without Hats did "Safety Dance" it was a reaction against violent dancing at punk gigs hurting people who wanted to do new wave dances. Do you feel like you're carrying on that tradition? Do you feel at all like a punk band?

J - I was probably ten years old when the "Safety Dance" was out. Violent dancing is great as long as it doesn't mean infringing upon other peoples freedom. "Punk", to me, doesn't mean slam dancing/pogoing or gobbing or studs on jackets. I can mean sitting down. The spirit of punk is D.I.Y.-ness and enthusiasm, not violence.

P - We are definitely a punk band, and we dance like it, but we don't hurt people.



8. What do you folks do outside of the band? School? Work? Dole?

P - We eat sweets. I co-run Slampt. I listen to the Ramones a lot and go to the cinema.

J - I'm learning to be an artist, that is what I want to be when I grow up. And I clean a local band.

P - Christine is a student, but she's invisible at the moment.

9. Could you explain the concept of the Deviancy Amplification Spiral for those who don't have the single?

P - We took the name from a text book called "Resistance Through Ritual". It's a model of how deviancy can be increased through connected factors. (CF: "We're A Happy Family" by the Ramones). I guess we regard ourselves as deviants and we're happy this way! Who cares if people stare at us because of how we dance? We couldn't give a fuck.

J - Yes!

10. The diagram on your front cover and on the single sleeve looks like a Situationist art project.

The Deviancy
Amplification
Spiral

The Vulnerable

The Corrupt

now

Would you say that you were a political band at all? Is there room for politics in pop?

J - I'm sorry, I'm responsible for the 7" sleeve. Every band is political, but to different degrees. We're not overtly political, but just the act of actively embracing the independent scene as opposed to the mainstream is a political act. I found it hilarious that someone has theorized the concept of "geeks", or kids that just don't fit in with their contemporaries. I think Slampt fits into the concentric circle w/ "The Corrupt" printed in it.

P - But we're not situationist - I've nothing against Situationism, I just don't know much about it.

11. The Smiths? Morrissey? Yes? No?

P - I was obsessed with the Smiths when I was 15, I must admit. I don't like Morrissey's solo stuff, and when I hear Smiths stuff now I do feel that perhaps Morrissey was deliberately manipulating teenagers emotions... but then again, so does "Leader of the Pack" and stuff like that, which I love, so... I don't listen to them anymore, but they meant loads to me at the time. They are one of those bands with hoards of fans who are self-pitying idiots, but at the same time if you can overlook that, they did do some great records, and I still love early stuff like "Reel Around The Fountain".

J - I never liked the Smiths, until about a month ago. I'm not really a fan. I don't like Morrissey at all. He seems very arrogant.

12. What bands do you feel influence you? A lot of folks say Beat Happening. Is there some secret connection between Olympia and Newcastle?

P - Beat Happening were a completely awesome band in my opinion, but they were probably more of an influence on the music of Avocado Baby (another musical thing I do. K and Kill Rock Stars are two of my favorite labels, and K was a direct inspiration for setting up Slampt, although having said that there are big differences. I don't actually think Milky Wimpshake sounds anything at all like Beat Happening.

13. What else do you have out other than the Slampt 7"? What plans do you have?

P - We have a nine song cassette available of Slampt called "Songs Of Zoom And Buzz" and we have two songs on the Slampt compilation LP "Elastic Jet Mission".

14. Any last comments?

J - Grace Brawn wears lovely spectacles.

Write Milky Wimpshake

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SLANT 6

NAILS OF HAWAIIAN

Nails Of Hawaiian are an incredible high speed pop punk band from Tokyo I had the good fortune of seeing three times last winter. Like so many Tokyo bands, they had a great sense of US punk and pop punk. And like so many Tokyo bands, they improve on the formula 10 times over. Music is taken much more seriously over there from the audience involvement to the bands commitment (practicing, writing good songs, etc.). This interview was done through the mail and is, of course, somewhat limited by my complete lack of Japanese language...

1. Okay, who is who in the band and what do you play and how many different drummers have you had?

NOH - Hera on drums. Yuji Tanimoto on bass and vocals. Isao Amano on guitar and vocals. Hera is the third drummer for us.

2. What is the meaning behind the name Nails Of Hawaiian?

NOH - No special meaning. We wanted to have the name from foreign country's or people's names.

3. It seems like every band in Japan (you included) are incredibly tight and great live. How often do you practice? How long have you been playing your instruments?

NOH - Twice a week. Hera has played for 15 years. Yuji has played for 12 years and Isao for 8 years.

4. While very melodic, you band doesn't seem to have the overt US or Snuff influences that a lot of bands in Japan have. Where do you feel your musical influences stem? What records did you listen to when you were learning how to play music?

NOH - We like some US bands like Jawbreaker. Hera and Yuji like the Police. Isao likes Elvis Costello and Stiff Little Fingers. Yuji likes the Jam and Hera likes Kiss.

5. What are your lyrics about? What gives you your lyrical inspiration? Do you feel that is influenced by other bands?

NOH - Very personal matters and songs about various things in the media.



nails of hawaiian

6. Most (if not all) of your lyrics are in English. Is there a specific reason for that? Do you feel uncomfortable singing in Japanese?

NOH - It is difficult that we can sing in Japanese for our melody. We have no problem with singing in Japanese if we can sing well in Japanese for our songs.

7. How often do you play in Japan? How often do you tour? Is it easy to get shows in Japan? What is the usual Nails of Hawaiian gig like?

NOH - We have two or three shows a month in Tokyo. We have two or three tours a year to Osaka or Nagoya. It is easy to get shows. But it is not easy to get many

audiences. We usually lose money for getting shows. Our gigs vary on moods, places and bands we play with.

8. Who's cat is that on the cover of the last 7"? Would you say that you're pro cat?

NOH - Isao's cat. We like cats cause they don't sell themselves for favors like dogs.

9. What do you do outside of the band? Do you all have jobs? What kinds of work do you do?

NOH - Hera is working in a post office. Yuji is working in a coffee shop. Isao is working as a video director.

10. Is there a scene for bands like you in Japan? What bands do you feel you relate to mostly in Japan? Do you feel like there is any kind of division between pop punk bands like yourselves, and noisier bands like Blood Thirsty Butchers?

NOH - We think there is a small scene (or something like a scene) in Tokyo. But we don't know about other towns. We mostly relate to Hi-Standard, Taifu Ikka. We don't feel there's any difference between us and the Butchers.

11. There seems to be a shitload of drinking going on in Japan. Do you think that's at all detrimental to the scene and the gigs? I drink like most people. But it seemed like most people there drink all the time!

NOH - We think it is OK to drink for having fun for the bands and audiences.

12. What do you have planned next as far as releases? Next plans?

NOH - We want to play in USA soon. (They did play some bay area gigs this year - Lance) We will release a new CD from Snuffy Smiles in the near future. (It's out and it's great - Lance)

Write Nails Of Hawaiian:
2-4-17-203 Shimouma
Setagaya-Ku Tokyo
154 Japan



NO EMPATHY YOU'RE SO SMART

Hey, No Empathy have been around for a billion years playing melodic hardcore in the Chicago area. Kind of a cross between the old Chicago punk sound (made famous by the Effigies) and the more recent Chicago punk sound (made famous by everyone that seems to put out a single there). This interview was done with singer Mark Ruvollo who's a pretty nice guy.

1. Okay, the band has been around for about 30 years now... How do you keep motivated? How do you keep interested in the old songs? How do you keep interested in the scene at all?

NE - A few of the things that keep me motivated and interested in the punk scene is the constant influx of new bands and people. I love meeting and making new friends, and there are always new bands who when you see them for the first time give you that "chill" where you go "wow, I love this". Human beings are fucking wonderful and horrible all at the same time. Sometimes that's bad and sometimes that's good, but it's always interesting. As for songs there's always that kick ass feeling when a good new one finally gels and good memories associated with playing old ones. Songs are kind of like people I guess.

2. Can you give a somewhat brief band history? I know it's a boring question...

NE - No Empathy was formed in late 1983 by me and a bunch of other folx who went on to other bands (Seam, most notably) we played punk in abject poverty for four years then everyone quit. I reformed the band with some unsavory characters did a lot of drugs and entered the supposedly tongue-in-cheek "metal period" of NE and we released our "lost" album "Nothing Less Than Nothing At All" in 1987. I cringer to this day and learned that most people don't understand sarcasm and that perhaps I don't understand sarcasm. All those dopes quit and I got the line-up that we still have today in '88. In '89 we released "Freedom Of Flesh" on Roadkill Records. In 1991 we released the "Agrippa" 7" and toured the East Coast and then in 1993 we released the "They Want Whatever" LP and toured West. Late '94 saw the release of our last LP "You're So Smart" and another tour west.

3. What is it like being a Chicago band outside of the Ben Weasel scene? Do you feel like opportunities are missed because of your position in the Chicago scene? Do you feel at all competitive with the other

bands?

NE - It may appear so from outside Chicago, but there really is no "Ben Weasel Scene". The main Chicago scene is made up of a loose core of friend bands (Bollweevils,

Oblivion, No Empathy, The Fighters, Sidekick Kato, Apocalypse Hoboken, The Mushuganas, Lunkhead, 88 Finders Louie, Cap'n Jazz, and a host of smaller bands) and promoters, Brian Peterson, Dave Eaves, and myself who do almsot all the all ages shows. The main "sister" labels are Underdog, Dyslexic Records, and Johann's Face. We all hang out and go to each others shows and parties. There's competition but it's pretty much all fun and the events are devinatly non-exclusive.

4. For a band that has been around for so long, I don't really remember you folks ever touring before a year or so ago... What's with the new interest in touring? NE - We toured west and played Gilman and a party in Oakland in the summer of '89. But we were ignored as only California can ignore people. I'm just better at booking tours now and we're in a better financial position so we go when we can which is a least one full month a year and as many weekends as possible.

5. What do you folks do for a living? What do you do when you aren't busy rocking? NE - Our guitarist Chuck Uchipa runs a punk studio called Attica and a bar called Clut Foot. Our drummer Kurt Stephens is a freelance computer programmer. Steve Gallup our bassist is a mover. Martin Geraghty our guitar is a union laborer and I run Johann's Face Records and promote all ages shows.

6. So Chicago is the new hip and hot spot (in some ways). Do you go out and see for example, Liz Phair hanging out with Ben Weasel hanging out with A Jorgenson?

NE - Chicago can never be the new "Seattle" because there are a hundred differen music scenes here and they all do their bes to ignore each other. That's the way we like it, sort of a twisted D.I.Y. competition while pretending to ignore each other.

7. What are local show like for you? What is a good show and a good bill for you folks?

NE - The best local shows happen at the Fire side Bowl and are put on by Brian Petersor. The Bowl is a punk all ages dive that you can also drink and bowl at. It is out of control on a good night. We like to play with

Oblivion best and possibly some touring band that's never been to Chicago so that we can five them a show to remember when they get home.

8. So do you like Bad Religion? "Into The Unknown" as much as I do. Or was that just a random cover? What other covers do you do?

NE - I love "Into The Unknown". It is such unabashed cheese. I love to picture them making it. It reminds me of one of my fa

vorite childhood bands Styx, only not as punk. We cover "White Riot" by the Clash, "Strongbox" by the Effigies, "I Wanna Be Free" by the Rings and "Come Sail Away" by Styx.

9. Nice looking boxset. Didn't that cost you a fortune? Are you happy with the new album? I think it's your first proper studio album in ages (if not ever). Is that right?

NE - Our boxset is just a black 7" tape Reel Box with a sticker on it. It costs about the same to manufacture as a 12" LP but is way more fun cause you can put more stuff in it. We are very happy with "You're So Smart" and you're right about it being our first proper studio album ever. We finally feel comfortable and know exactly what we want to convey. It only took ten years!

10. What are the new bands in Chicago that you're really into? Are there any secrets in Chicago?

NE - Not Rebecca is a really great Chicago band that Johann's is putting out. Their record is called "Twin Cities Obituary" and is right smack in the middle ground between No Empathy and Smoking Popes. Dark Desperate Pop Punk. Cap'n Jazz is also amazing and so is Sidekick Kato. Those are definately my favorites.

11. How is Johann's Face doing? Does the whole band work on the label or what?

NE - Johann's is doing really well. We're improving our distro and a lot more people seem to be really getting into our stuff locally and nationally. The band helps us out sometimes on big projects but mainly it's just me and my partner Gar Brandt.

12. Any last comments?

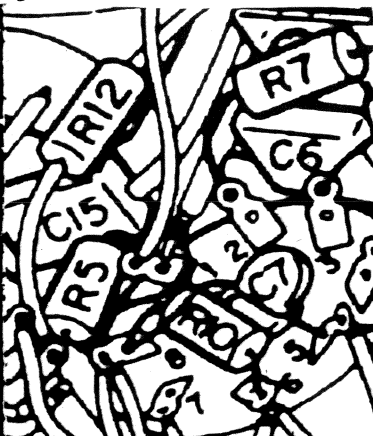
NE - Write us for a catalog or just write to say hey!

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THE PHANTOM PREGNANCIES

Hi-Jack

MADE IN ENGLAND

THE PHANTOM PREGNANCIES are a great new band from London (don't ask me where in London). Sort of a supergroup, the band demands anonymity and act under pseudonyms. Dog Pigeon - guitar, Deformo - vocals, Sheba - drums, Shade or Sparrow - guitar. So far, they've released a split single with the excellent Rent Boy Assassin on *Damaged Goods* with a full length to follow. Interview done via fax and mail.

1. What's in a name? Phantom: I get the retro reference. Pregnancies? Is somebody hiding something?

Deformo - You say you get the retro reference but you obviously don't understand it. I am anti-retro. I hate being somewhere where everyone's trying to convince themselves they're teenagers in 1967 or something. That's what our song Quiffs Don't Suit Me is all about. It's like being at one of those really sad conventions where everyone goes dressed as Elvis Presley. Recreating the past is interesting at it's very best, but it's never exciting. Now is exciting. Year Zero. Zero like when you're born. Pregnancy...geddit? Besides, we talked so much about the band before we even did anything that it existed and didn't exist at the same time. We talked about rehearsals we had but didn't have. So it was like we felt we were creating something but in reality we weren't. Like a phantom pregnancy.

Dog Pigeon - If they are hiding something they are doing a good job cause I can't find it, whatever it is. Maybe it is something that doesn't exist. So I won't find it anyway. Who knows? If you do tell me.

Sheba - It's punk.

Sparrow - Ask Sean - it's a grim name - something to do with being fat I think? We're a cautionary tale for the kids - don't fuck without condoms or you'll look like this!

2. Lots of people refer to you as a garage band yet your split single doesn't seem especially garage like. Do you think of yourselves as a garage band? If not what?

If so why?

D- Garage is about ripping the place apart with treble, not wiggling your head ever so slightly appreciating the subtle nuances in tone. Your makeup should end up runnin down yr face, yr hair should stick up in the last place you put yr hand in yr hair while you screamed, you should be fucking tense and ugly. We bust a sweat like I imagine the greatest and rawest garage bands did. We're not concerned with this authentic 60's bollocks. Yeh we're garage.

DP - Well our 3rd gig was at the garage in Islington, London, so I think that sums it up, but we've also played at the Laurel Tree, so maybe we're a forest sort of band.

Sh - Who, what, why when... I dunno??

Sp - I was doped, I was kidnapped. I hang my head in a shame! I wanted to be in a garage band and what am I in? A punk band! I wanted to be 30 years out of date and I'm only 20 years out of date. Shit!

3. What's with the low budget recordings? Is this an aesthetic yr following or is it an economic necessity?

D - We use a 1-track and we record at our hideout because we do. We create a noise that is meant to put you on edge. We are the

ants in your pants.

DP - It's low budget cause they don't charge higher prices, so it's cheap. We've all got tons of cash. But hey, what's 20 pounds a session. Especially when your pants itch. Sh - It's punk.

Sp - Who says it's lo fi? It's in stereo! What more do you want? We've got more subtlety than most bands! We've got quite a bit and loud bits!

4. Who writes the lyrics? Is it a collective effort or just one person? How do the songs come together?

D - The hate and fear of certain things in the present are told in a sci-fi way using our alter-egos. The words aren't train of thought but they are unrevised as is the music. Something of the feeling would be lost if we spent more than half an hour on any song. The lyrics are transferred thru electricity airwaves as we make noise and are interpreted thru the hand of Deformo.

DP - We all take an equal share in writing the lyrics. Except for Deformo who writes them all.

Sh - By Magic.

Sp - Yeah. (referring to DP. - ed.)

5. What are some of your favorite lyrics and why?

D - I wanna be instamatic, I wanna be a frozen pea, I wanna be dehydrated, In a consumer society. Why? It sums up Croydon and the way I think better than any other. They're cartoon and fun and violent all at the same time. Poly Styrene/X-Ray Spex.

DP - "I was diagnosed dyslexic but I'm KO now" by the great and very underrated J.D. Experience, from their "Where's My Blue Peter Badge You Bastard" flexi disc. "Watch out, Don't slip on the cat. Mind the horse.

He's on the sideboard, sleeping." by the Coin Castles, from the tape only release. "Deaf and dum, up your bum" by the Rhyming Slang Quartet.

Sh - You've made your bed, you better lie in it! (Because I'm tired).

Sp - I didn't know Deformo like d the X-Ray Spex!! Excellent. What good news!! I like the Wurzels and the Barron Knights and Rolf Harris and Keith Harris and Orville and 1/2 Man 1/2 Biscuit and Deformo and West Coast pop art experimental band and Syd Barret and Wat Tyler and anything that rhymes.

6. You are one member away from being some kind of supergroup. Why don't you sack him and get someone really famous to play guitar? Like Ben Corrigan or something?

D - One of the main things about the Pregnancies is our anonymity. If we promote the WT, MT or HB aspect to us then that's all we will ever be. And that Phantom Pregnancies will dilute. And one of us will be ex-

cluded. And I will get depressed. We are the Phantom Pregnancies and we are a fucking supergroup-Dog Pigeon, Sparrow or Shade, Sheba and Deformo.

DP - The way I look at it, we're three members away from a superb indie pop punk band, Dog Pigeon, Rodge, Dodge and Modge...

Sh - We are three members away from me going solo.

Sp - Ooooooh! Our original name was Dog Pigeon and his Feeble Dog Farts - Dog Pigeon is our solo / lead / star guitarist - we're just there as a backing band basking in reflected glory...

Q - Your previous bands do somewhat precede you. Do you feel any carry over influence from HB, WT or MT? Is it even possible?

DP - See Q.6 and get the hint.

DP - I've got some records by all of them, and some CDs and one tape.

Sh - Yeah, it's an honour to be in a band with one of Mambo Taxi!

Sp - Does it sound like it?

Q - Are you South Londoners or East Londoners. What's the difference?

DP - East Londoners have a better soap opera. South Londoners haven't got a soap opera at all.

DP - We're all from South London except those of us who are from North London. So why was East London mentioned? The difference, well, South Londoners come from South London and, wait for it, East Londoners don't. They come from East London.

Sh - South London=cool. The rest=tool.

Sp - What's East London?? Some PP members seem to be unnaturally obsessed with North/South divide - they're just dirty racists - I'm European - what's a river?? I've never been to South London but I'm sure it's dead nice except for the Venue - is that in South London?

9. What's the story with the album on Damaged Goods?

D - It's not a story so much as lots of different episodes in our alter-ego lives stuck onto a piece of paper with some UHU.

DP - We're doing an LP on Damaged Goods. And we all lived happily ever after.

Sh - We paid him ten grand to release it!

Sp - Mr. Damaged is an alcoholic who has an unfortunate tendency to 'sign' bands when paralytic - he was ours for a pint of cider (I think this method of working is not uncommon in the muso biz).

10. What's it like being an assistant teacher?

DP - I've got no idea, I'll go and ask one tomorrow. Then I'll let you know. But it's probably quite good. Just playing with little kids all day, you don't have to have a brain, or so I'm told. I'm sure that Charlie Chester was an assistant teacher, once.

Sh - It's punk.

Sp - You assist in teaching I suppose.



RED AUNTS

The RED AUNTS are from Long Beach. My memories of Long Beach are of one thing only: Fender's Ballroom. Huge punk shows, skinheads as bouncers working the stage and a sea of moronic punks moshing it up. Impressive at first, it quickly depressed the shit out of me.

The RED AUNTS are from Long Beach and I have to say that just seems weird. They're a pretty interesting punk band that are in no way totally described by the term like so many other bands. While there are elements of garage and '77 style punk in their overall sound, quirky song structure defines them without losing sight of tunefulness.

They're four girls and they're pretty rocking. But they sure don't seem to like doing interviews. This interview was done with Terri (Angel)...

1. Okay, first question is about the move to Epitaph. What exactly lead to that decision? You're not exactly part of the "Epitaph" sound. Are you afraid that it could adversely affect interest in the group? Do you think some people that would be really into the band might be thwarted by what people expect as being the "Epitaph" sound?

Red Aunts. If people don't buy a record because it's on a certain label then that's their tough luck. Epitaph has better distribution than anything we have ever had. So I think it will be more available to tons more people.

2. What's the deal with the album cover and the CD cover? Was there a conscious reason for the different artwork? Was it a conscious effort to make a record cover that didn't look like an Epitaph record? All of your artwork is pretty cool... Is it a band effort or do you get outside people to do your record covers?

Red Aunts. All three formats (CD, LP, Cassette) are different art work. We do all of it ourselves and always have.

3. What is daily life like for the Red Aunts? How often do you practice and how often do you tour? What do you folks do job-wise and hobby-wise outside of the band?

Red Aunts. We practice two times a week and this will be our second tour. I work at Epitaph for now until we go on tour. Hobby wise - Uhm, paint by numbers, knit, make pottery, macramé...

4. What is touring like for your band? Some bands are like best friends on the road. For others it's a six week long argument (flavored by fist fights). What's a Red Aunts tour like?

Red Aunts. We are all best friends. But sometimes we do want to slit each others throats... Only because we're creative individuals!

5. Because of the style of music you play, I'd imag-

ine you get a lot of bonehead macho dudes in the audience. How do you deal with it from the stage? Can idiots ruin the show for you or do you just let it bead off your back?

Red Aunts. The macho freaks are my favorite because you can yell at them and give them an occasional kick in the teeth.

6. What are the big favorite tapes on tour: What music gets played the most? Seems like on a lot of tours, peoples crazy tastes take over. I know Gaunt listen to the Smiths constantly on tour. What are your musical secret pleasures?

Red Aunts. Last tour we had a "tour song". It was "Ruby" by Boss Hog. It had just come out.

7. Who writes all the songs? Is it a collective effort? Are there ever situations where someone brings in a song and it gets totally vetoed by another band member? Are the Red Aunts a democracy or dictatorship (and I'm not implying that either one is right or wrong)?

Red Aunts. Most of the time the person who sings the song wrote it. We sometimes bring song in to practice and everyone will work on them. Nobody's songs are ever vetoed. We're a democracy.

8. Okay, Long Beach... What's up with the Queen Mary?

Red Aunts. It's just a big ole fucker sittin' in the water. Good bar, good jazz.

9. How ambitious are you with the band? There's certainly a major label craze in punk these days and it's helped as many as it's hurt. Where do you all fit into that? Has there been interest?

Red Aunts. Don't know. Don't care!

10. Foods. Are any of you vegetarian? What's your favorite junk food? Favorite tour food? What gets spilled the most in the van?

Red Aunts. I'm not a vegetarian. I love meat! My fave junk food is oreos, potato chips, beef jerky, twix, pie, donuts. Beer gets spilled in the van the most.

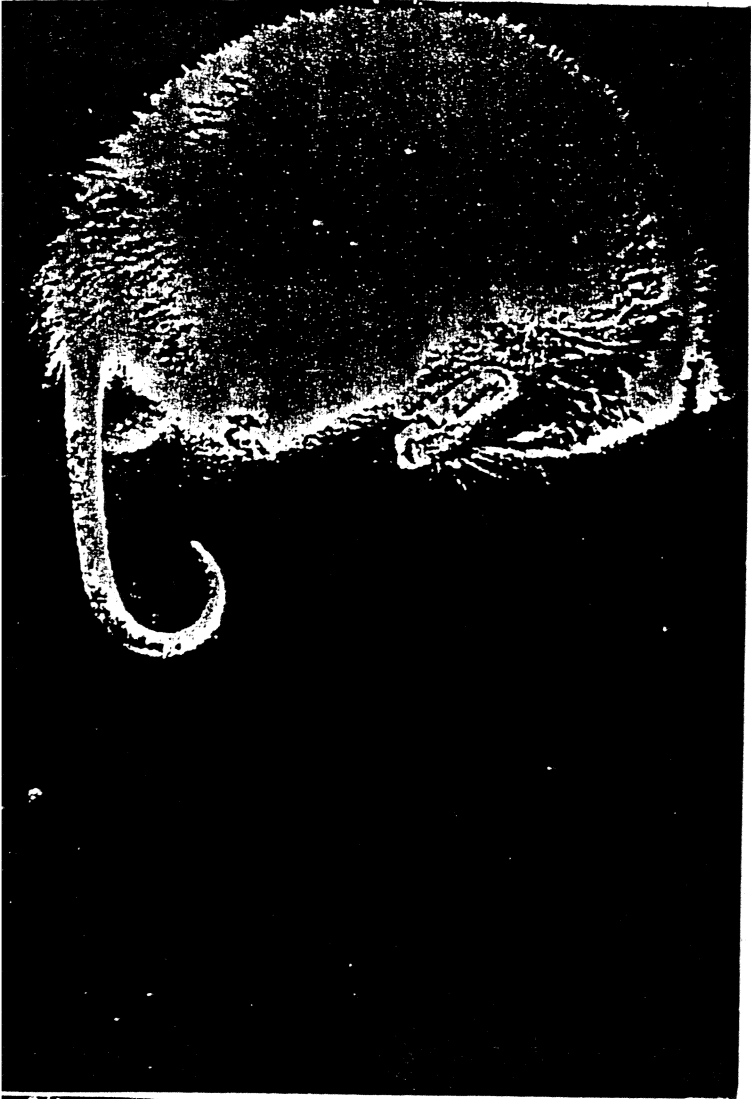
11. If there was one song you really wish you had written, what would it be? What are the five songs that changed your life?

Red Aunts. A) "Star Fuckers" The Rolling Stones. B) Five bands that changed my life-

1. Pussy Galore
2. Rolling Stones
3. Clawhammer
4. Rocket
5. '68 Comeback (the early years)



Refrigerator



1. Is there some heavy reasoning to the name Refrigerator? Is it a pop music version of pop art? Four track "ready mades"? Or is it simply one of the most essential appliances in any home?

Refrigerator - I liked the architecture of the letters that make up refrigerator, the way they look together. When all is said and done, it's a rather lame name for any sort of music band and I guess that was appealing too.

2. Do the levels of fame that correspond with running a label like Shrimper ever lead to you overshadowing other band members?

R - Allen is the silent partner with Lenny Waronker at Seed Records and together Joel and Chris are giving Suddenly Tammy a big push now that they are on their Spin Art label. So I'm the underdog as far as big money making propositions go. Allen will often times mock me in front of my peers referring to me as the "incompetent ninny that nursed Seth Sanders back to health", or worse yet "maestro of Shitter"... Everybody has troubles and in retrospect I'm in an ok position.

3. I know you've played in San Francisco at least a couple of times... What does it take to get a band like Refrigerator on the road? Have you done any touring of any length?

R - We usually go out for one week trips up or down the West Coast, maybe twice a year. As I'm sure is the problem with many bands, finding the time and money to go out any longer has been elusive. The appeal of going out on a two month tour may be latent, so far so good.

4. How did Upland become such a breeding ground for four track creativity? I remember this guy named Bill Batchelor doing some weird zine from up there. Are there any roots to the Upland music scene?

R - Bad Junior High Schools. Now plugged cultural identity, lack of information in regards to the "How To Play Guitar" junkets. Many of Uplands sublime groves and unbleached streets have been washed down. Everytime I turn around a new mini mall has sprung weeds. The mayor would reciprocate with a firm "fuck you".

5. Is the four track a necessity to make pop music populist? Or is it an economic necessity until bands can afford better studios?

R - I just got a four track and it's appeal is limited. I've always enjoyed recording live and having cut and dry

takes of songs. The ability to "fix things in the mix" isn't necessarily a good thing. Solo stuff is live to one track and Refrigerator stuff is recorded live in the studio, usually Allen goes back and records some of his vocals. But most of our available recordings are live recordings. The accessibility to a mic and tape deck for most is a

Refrigerator

great thing. Just as any movement, once it is named, used as a key selling point and commodified, loses it's magic. "Lo-fi" is a great way to inorganically kill off home recorded music. Financially stilted, we are recording on an eight track now.

6. With all the lo-fi bands around, is the means of production as important as the songs themselves? Is it presumptuous to say there is even a four track scene?

R - The only "band" I can think of where in the aesthetics of recording truly make them good is Guided By Voices. Were they to be recorded in a 24 track studio (which I'm sure they will, what with the right management, lawyers and publicists in their camp) it would be revealed that they sound just like Wings. Songs are always more important than production values - even in the case of

abstract constructionalists like a band and gate.

7. Do you think of Refrigerator as a pop band in any sense of the word? What kinds of cannnotations do the words "pop band" stir for you?

R - Sure. Just like The Spencer Davis Group or The Strawbs. When I think of good pop for some reason The Furtips come to mind. A good sense of what to subtract from a song and when to exit a chorus.

8. What is your favorite song on commercial radio today?

R - Springsteen "Murder Inc."

9. What is your essential television viewing, if any?

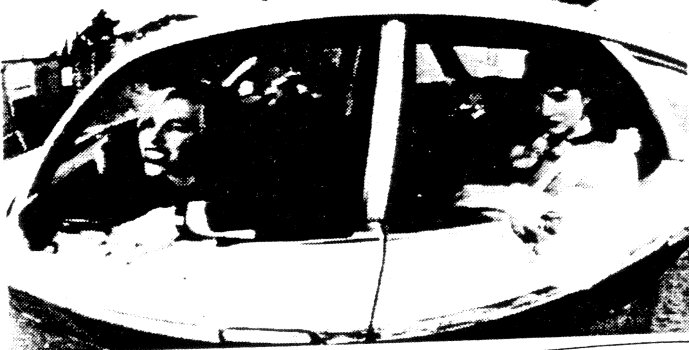
R - No favorite show though as of late I have been watching terrible late night TV. Trinity Broadcasting Network is a hoot.

10. What made you want to do a record with Communion? Was it Gary Held's high pressure tactics?

R - Gary is quicker than I am to shoot himself in the foot. Besides being fiercely independent and putting out these wonderful tribute records (Stoned Again! saved my live) he is a good friend.

11. Of the Refrigerator catalog, what song are you most attached to?

R - Boy, no song in particular. I lean toward the newer



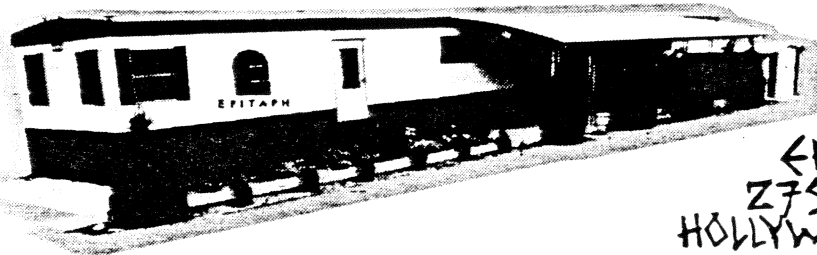
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the Slampt Underground Organization



SLAMPT UNDERGROUND ORGANIZATION is a very cool "label" out of Newcastle, England. Apparently, the industrial town produces Newcastle Brown Ale and cool lo-fi pop music. Peter of SLAMPT was kind enough to put together this discography/timeline of their activities...

Slampt 1 "Hate And Hope"/"What's This Generation Coming To?" - Double fanzine package. We did 200 copies. It gave us the chance to rant about various topics, and gave us a starting point.

Slampt 2 "Avocado Baby "A Million And Nine" (cassette only). It had 16 songs in 22 minutes, and we only made 5 copies initially, because we couldn't believe that anyone would really want to hear it. As it turned out, it was a hit with all five people we sent it to, one of whom was Amelia from Heavenly who asked us to do a gig with them. We decided to make more copies of the tape, and eventually sold over 300, which we were pretty pleased with.

Slampt 3 V/A "Skinless Wonder" (Comp Tape). It was a C60 and featured tons of bands from Newcastle. Truthfully, we wanted to create the illusion that Newcastle had hundreds of exciting bands, which wasn't strictly true, so we would take our 4-track machine 'round to friends houses and press play and record and see what came out. Again, it could have been terrible, but turned out to be a hit and sold well over 300 copies.

Slampt 4 "Head Shaved Smooth" fanzine

Slampt 5 "C'mon Swing It" fanzine

Slampt 6 Milky Wimpshake "Songs of Zoom and Buzz" (cassette only). I met this girl called Joey and she turned out to be the craziest, funnest person I had met in a long time. She had even officially changed her name to Joey Ramone, the ultimate tribute to the greatest band ever. We formed a band, wrote nine songs straightway and released this tape.

Slampt 7 "Recipe For Disaster" - one page fanzine handed out at a gig.

Slampt 8 "Skin Swing Feel" fanzine

Slampt 9 "Pungk Punk" fanzine

Slampt 10 Avocado Baby "Queen Boy And The King Girl" 7" We decided we fancy'd doing a record, so we borrowed some money off Rachel's brother. We didn't know that you're supposed to have a DAT master, so we just took an ordinary cassette into the cutting room. The bloke thought we were a bit strange I think. We couldn't afford sleeves, so we just ripped pictures out of recipe books and glued them on to the paper bags the records came in.

Slampt 11 Slampt girl badge

Slampt 12 Slampt Xmas party, a six band performance at the Broken Doll, Newcastle.

Slampt 13 Unseen "Lo-fi is My-fi" (cassette). They

were our favorite local band, because they were fucking weirdo's and everyone hated them except us, and they looked evil but were really rather sweet.

Slampt 14 Golden Starlet "Scarlet Harlot" (cassette). Rachel went to school with Catherine and persuaded her to form a band. They turned out to be totally great, so we asked them to do a tape. Notable for the lack of guitar on their tape.

Slampt 15 "Valentine Massacre" We sent Valentine cards to everyone we were in love with at the time.

Slampt 16 Pussycat Trash "La La Ovular" 7". We recorded it live in a tiny radio station room in Sunderland. It was the roughest, messiest sound we'd achieved, so we were really pleased with it. John Peel (top UK DJ and excellent bloke) phoned us up after it came out and said that he was really pleased that he liked it, because he'd hated the session we did for his program! A real double-edged compliment.

Slampt 17 "Sugar Rocket" fanzine

Slampt 18 "Look!" a 10 minute Super 8 film make by Ms. Joey Ramone (punk girl).

Slampt 19 Unseen "Youth Hole" 7". They had thrown Paddy (bass player and vocalist) out of the band, but decided to use him for the recording session. Thus there was a pretty unpleasant atmosphere, because they were hardly speaking to each other. Ironically though, the songs are actually by far the most happy sounding, poppy recordings the band has ever done!

Slampt 20 Avocado Baby "Sex And Gum" (cassette). We had 20 new songs, so we stuck out another tape. Some people said it was really disappointing, some people said it was our best stuff yet! Whatever... we just please ourselves.

Slampt 21 Golden Starlet "Cheap Tartlets" 7". With an added guitar, they were better than ever!

Slampt 22 Summer Pungk Xplose! 10 band festival gig at the Broken Doll, Newcastle.

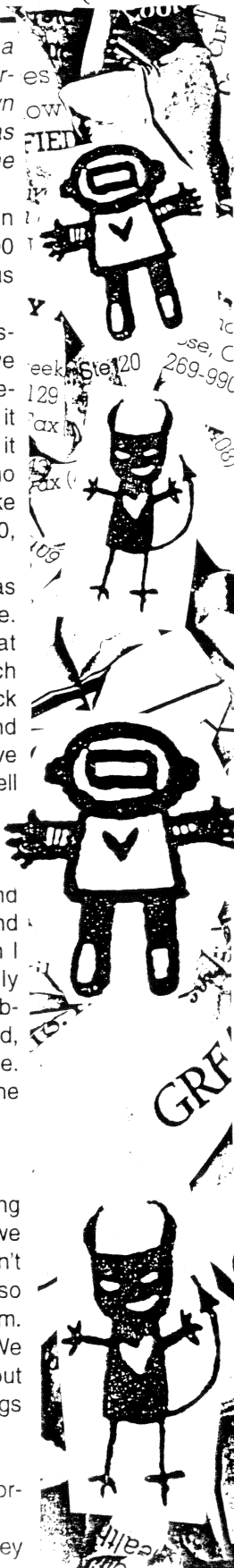
Slampt 23 Mad Kenny's All-Night Drinker "Plays Their Own Songs With Other Peoples Chords" (cassette) This gave Simon from Pussycat Trash the opportunity to take on a Billy Childish/Dean Martin persona, if you can imagine the mix.

Slampt 24 Milky Wimpshake "The Deviancy Amplification Spiral" 7". More pop songs. We recorded it in our front room at Slampt HQ, and you can hear that authentic 4-track hiss between the songs.

Slampt 25 Pussycat Trash "Non-Stop Hip-Action" LP. We had always said we'd never do an LP, but then we changed our minds. It cost 150 lbs to record, and we did it in three days during the Summer last year.

Slampt 26 "Slampt Aesthetic and Notion" fanzine.

Slampt 27 The Yummy Fur "Songs By Walt Disney But Performed By Yuri Gagarin, Therefore A Political Record" 7". They recorded 15 songs in one 10-hour



studio session, which we thought was pretty good going. Mind you, they only managed to fit 10 songs on the 7" which was a shame. They've got well over 50 songs in their repertoire, but even if they played every single one next to each other, it would still be less than an hour of playing! Respect is due.

Slampt 28 "Elastic Jet Mission" (LP). We decided to do a comp LP so we could put all our favorite bands together on one record. We think it's a totally awesome record, so there!

Slampt 29 Missy X "Edit Yrself" (cassette). After Paddy left/was-ejected-from Unseen, he formed this Avant-garde jazz noise outfit, with mystery enigma the Kid Lemon. Notable for the fact that they use clean guitars and a saxophone, yet still sound as noisy as any "distorted" guitar band.

Slampt 30 V/A "Lone Rangers" (cassette). This is a comp tape of solo performances by various people from Slampt outfits, e.g.. Glyn from Unseen, Ballerina Pink (a.k.a. Rachel Rocket) from Pussycat Trash/Avocado Baby and Kid Lemon from Missy X. We think it's a great tape, but some folks disagree, but who cares?

Slampt 31 Kenickie "Catsuit City" 7". Coming soon! Sunderland's teen girl xplosion outfit. File under: better than the Beatles. (*It's out already!- Lance*)

Write for their catalog. They're very nice people.
SLAMPT UNDERGROUND ORGANIZATION
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★ SUPERCUNK



This interview is with Mac from Superchunk, Portastatic and Merge. He's also released amazing music through his previous bands; Slushpuppies, Wwax and Bricks. Anyway, he's a real nice guy and this interview was done over a period of time through fax machines coast to coast.

1. Now that you're playing pretty big venues (the Fillmore here last time) do you feel like you can completely graduate from the van tour concept? Have you done any bus tours at this point?

Mac - I don't think that we can (financially) or that we want to graduate from the van tour concept... Iliac having a bed (even if it is at the red roof inn) and I like not having to get on a bus after each show if we'd rather hang out with pals, drink ourselves silly, etc. plus there's Jim's main reason: no shitting on the bus.

2. Do you think the insane success of bands like Green Day has any impact on what you folks are doing? Do you think the revived (manufactured?) interest in... uh, "punk" affects bands like Superchunk or do you think you are out of that loop? A lot of people do think of you folks as pop punk...

Mac - I think for the most part we are out of that green day / Warnerpunk loop, and the people that bought a zillion copies of Dookie have no idea who we are, though the offspring might have thought that at one point as well since they actually sold their zillion records going through basically the same distribution, etc. that touch and go uses, so the worlds aren't all that far apart anymore... obviously the more records we sell, the more people at shows are MTV / commercial alt. radio - oriented, in other words, more dorks, but even at those belly shows there were still plenty of cool people who knew the records and were genuinely into it.

3. Now with so many records under your belt, do you feel you make a conscious effort to customize your songs to the Superchunk "sound"? Does it in anyway inhibit your songwriting? On the other hand, do you feel like you must consciously keep pushing forward with each record to avoid getting caught in a rut? I guess what I'm asking is, do you see a "Sandinista" or "Into The Unknown" anywhere in your horizons?

Mac - Hopefully, there will be no "Into The Unknown" in our future, though unfortunately that also means there will probably be no "Trout Mask Replica" either... We definitely are more driven towards avoiding customizing our songs to be "superchunk"-ish, and on the new record (as well as the last two, I thought) there are different types of songs, weirder guitar parts, some organ and stuff, but in general, we know what our strengths are, and we're a tour piece

rock band without the instrument-switching capabilities of a Yo La Tengo so of course you'll know it's Superchunk when you hear it I think...

4. The last album seemed like a lot of venting in terms or personal relations (lyrically). Is that something you needed to get fully out of your system? Do you feel that you are in any ways pigeon holed as a band that mostly writes relationship-oriented songs? Is that at all contrived and how significant or trivial are the lyrics to the overall landscape of the songs?

Mac - I don't think you ever get personal / relationship issues "out of your system" as they are an element of everyday life... A lot of the lyrics are, in some obscure way, about those things, though as I've said before most songs start out about one thing and then through some sort of random associations become about something else by the end... Many songs are also about fictional relationships between fictional people... I think lyrics are important in that they can convey, through interesting / unexpected images some sort of mood or situation without saying "this is what would happen if your girlfriend moved to Alaska".

5. Just to get an idea of the daily workings of the band, roughly how often do you tour a year and how often do you practice when you're not touring?

Mac - We tour, I think, for about five months out of the year, maybe only four this year. Though of course that's not five months straight, and we practice anywhere from every other day (getting ready to record) to once every two weeks (no tour in sight).. Our practice space just got really miserable when the hot weather got here.

6. I know this may seem like a longshot or a question, but your songs seem musically influenced by the late '70s/early '80s new wave of songwriters types. In many ways, people like XTC, Squeeze and maybe Elvis Costello. Is there any truth to that? What era of pop music most sentimentally affects you? What song can you hear on the radio and get instantly misty?

Mac - I think you're right about the new wave thing, especially Elvis Costello. Though maybe not so much his new wave (though I love "This Year's Model" one of the first wave records I ever bought) as "Imperial Bedroom" / "Blood And Chocolate" where I think his words got even better... More recently someone like Mark Eitzel has definitely been someone who you listen to and go "OK, I like give up"... Even Yo La Tengo's "Georgia" and "Ira" sometimes approach Richard and Linda Thompson-type breathtakingness... So I guess it's not all new wave influence. But some... The new wave and hardcore I listened to most in the

early eighties (New Order, Teardrop Explodes / Black Flag, C.O.C., Minutemen) you probably can't really hear, however, in Superchunk... "Animosity" definitely gets me all misty when I hear it on the radio.

7. What are some of your favorite current movies? Are there any particular actors or actresses or directors you follow? What do you think of Jennifer Jason Leigh?

Mac - Recent movies I liked... "Once Were Warriors", "Fresh", "Hoop Dreams", "Kiss Of Death". It's always hard to think of these on the spot... Oh yeah, "Exotica" was really good... On the Jennifer Jason Leigh issue... I think I started to like her in "Short Cuts" and "Hudsucker Proxy" and then she perfected that annoying (in a good way) accent for "Mrs. Parker and Her Vicious Circle" and Alan Rudolph movie which I loved, so now I like her... I like Hal Hartley though I haven't seen his new one, and I liked those movies "Red", "White" and "Blue" all of whose heroines were ravishing...

8. What kinds of degrees do the members of Superchunk have? Is this band college educated-core?

Mac - We all graduated from college except Jon, who graduated from the school of hard knocks - me - history, Laura - anthropology, Jim - English and teaching so we're kind of college-core though more high school-core.

9. What is your personal perspective on the value of your lyrics? Do they serve as an immediate form of communication? Are they primarily a documentation of events in your life? A mapping of your personality?

Mac - See above question about lyrics, though year to an extent there is a documentation of everyday events that sometimes come to represent symptoms of stress and trauma in your life... The title of the new record, "Here's Where The Strings Come In" is kind of making fun of the melodrama that naturally results from writing lyrics based on relationships, personal shit, etc.

10. What comes first the lyrics or the music? Any direct influences currently? Are there any bands that you feel are doing something similar to what you're doing?

Mac - Music usually first and then either lyrics that are already written are added or written as we play the song over and over a hundred times in practice... other similar bands? I don't know, most of my favorite bands, Yo La Tengo, Stereolab, Magnetic Fields, etc. I feel are doing more interesting and imaginative things than we are... Of course others like Versus, Seaweed, GBV, spent I guess are similar in some ways... I'm not sure how other bands operate really.

11. What was it like doing Conan O'Brian? Was it totally weird? Was he a nice guy or a total dick? You can be frank with me... I like to think he would be a nice guy...

Mac - Conan was nice though I had to walk right into his dressing room uninvited, where he was practicing guitar, and I think I scared him at first 'til he realized I was part of the band... I've never been so nervous, my mouth went all dry, which never happens plus it's like 50 degrees in the studio, really cold... Everyone who works on the show is extremely friendly and accommodating.

12. Okay, the US, Japan, Europe and Australia. Where's your favorite touring spot?

Mac - The US is definitely the easiest place to tour, you know how things work, you know the towns after a few tours, it's just more comfortable psychologically, but I think Australia and New Zealand were the most

all-out fun and gorgeous places... Japan was amazing, I felt like we didn't really deserve to go there, it's so different and everyone was so nice to us (we played on Christmas — pretty surreal), I just which I could have spoken to people there without a translator... Everywhere besides the US and England bands are treated with more respect by clubs, promoters, etc. So that's good about Europe and Spain and Italy are beautiful and the fans rabid, but for every three days in Spain you have to spend three weeks in Germany in the rain, so I don't know about Europe in general. I think it wears you down faster than anywhere...

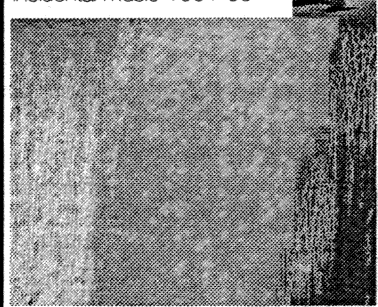
13. What's your personal obsession with Japan? Don't you speak some Katakana or something like that? Is it just some life long fascination?

Mac - I tried to learn Japanese from books and tapes when we got back from Japan since it was so frustrating not being able to talk to people there, but without someone making me do it every day, I couldn't keep it up... I still remember how to say "watakushi no hon wa doko ni arimasu ka?"... Where is my book... Quite useful... Of course I do love Ultraman from when I was little and got some cool stuff over there.

14. Any last comments?

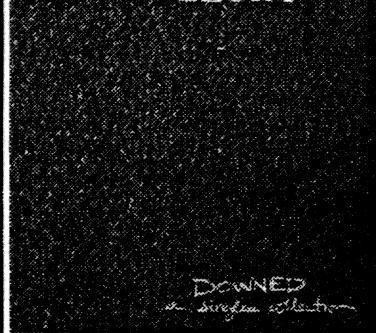
Mac - I can never think of interesting last comments, sorry.

SUPERCHUNK
incidental music 1991-95



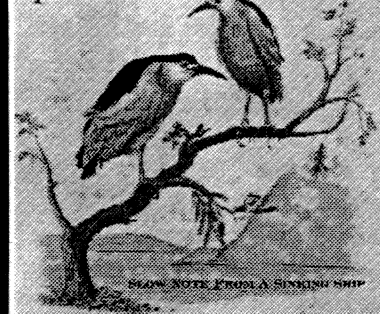
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BUTTERGLORY



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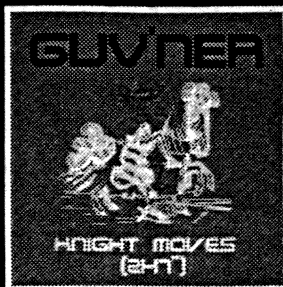


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VOMIT LAUNCH

VOMIT LAUNCH

A long time ago, I did a fanzine called AOK. I totally lost interest in it and dissolved it after nine issues. VOMIT LAUNCH were one of my favorite bands and I had done this interview with them for what should have been issue number 10. Well, since then, the band split up and I've started with this new fanzine project. Since I still totally love the band I've decided to run this interview anyway. If you don't know about VOMIT LAUNCH I strongly suggest hunting down some of their Teen Beat releases. If you were into them, it's just a little souvenir. This interview was done with Larry the bassist and it's not very long because I didn't think they were gonna respond at all...

1. Do ya thin the band name holds ya back from being huge pop stars?

Vomit Launch: It keeps idiotic major labels and deaf DJ's and payola-soaked hack writers from dealing with us. I'd rather someone like us because of the music, not the name. Some of the most popular "alternative" bands I've known are still in debt to over-spending record labels and had less fun than we do. The people who like us really do, and that's fine.

2. Any recent cathartic Vomit moments?

Vomit Launch: ca-thar-sis "the purging of an audience's emotions through a work of art". Gosh no, one would never imagine we were that good!

3. What's the connection between Mad Rover and Teen Beat?

Vomit Launch: AT+T?/Teen Beat had \$ to make the CD and Mad Rover had \$ to do cassettes. "Dogeared" and "Mr. Spench" were recorded at Mad Rover's studios and they own those recordings. Teen Beat liked it and helped to get it out. Nobody's making any money, that's for sure.

4. How fine is the line between Barbara Manning and Cowboy Junkies?

Vomit Launch: As far as I know Barbara doesn't do smack and is for sure no cowboy. I've heard that a lot of cowboys have been shooting up lately, probably due to the recession and a lack of jobs.

5. Chico's finest features?

Vomit Launch: Bidwell Park: a huge park with creek and canyon, bike trails, swimming holes, etc. Inexpensive beer prices (\$6.99 a case). Cheap practice place.

6. Any chance of Patricia going blonde again?

Vomit Launch: She said, "maybe" and she doesn't know.

7. Any last comments?

Vomit Launch: This has been going on over seven and a half years; we're tired and cranky; the indie music biz stinks but not as bad as the big business; we all hope Bush doesn't get back in office (hey, I said it was an old interview - Lance); minimum wage is too low; people in Chico would rather drink than see live music; etc...



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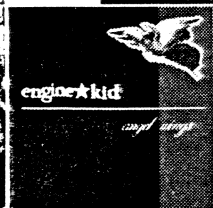
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Thanx, Lance

PENNYWISE

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